

Please **HONOR** the copyright of
these documents by not
retransmitting or making any
additional copies in any form
(Except for private personal use).
We appreciate your respectful
cooperation.

Theological Research Exchange Network
(TREN)

P.O. Box 30183
Portland, Oregon 97294
USA

Website: www.tren.com
E-mail: rwjones@tren.com
Phone# 1-800-334-8736

ATTENTION CATALOGING LIBRARIANS
TREN ID#

Online Computer Library Center (OCLC)
MARC Record #

Digital Object Identification
DOI #

Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

GROWING NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES: CHANGING CHURCH CULTURE
AND BECOMING A MISSIONAL SENDING CHURCH

Written by

KYLE ERICKSON

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned reader:



Kurt Fredrickson

Date Received: December 9, 2015

GROWING NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES: CHANGING CHURCH CULTURE
AND BECOMING A MISSIONAL SENDING CHURCH

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

KYLE ERICKSON
DECEMBER 2015

ABSTRACT

Growing New Missional Communities: Changing Church Culture and Becoming a Missional Sending Church

Kyle B. Erickson

Doctor of Ministry

School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary

2015

The goal of this project was two-fold, to engineer culture change within an established, existing congregation seeking to move a programmatic and institutional church away from an attractional ministry paradigm and towards a more missional paradigm and, secondly, to embed a new commitment within a local congregation to plant churches. A core conviction of this project is that planting churches is the most effective way to grow the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom grows when new church plants minister on the front lines of culture more effectively than an established congregation can, but also as the established congregation is refreshed and renewed in its own commitment to the *Missio Dei* and thus experiences its own awakening. Thus, the Kingdom of God grows as both the new church plant and the established church grow in their own unique ministries to their own unique contexts and the tribes to whom they minister.

There is a great need to re-imagine ecclesiology and re-narrate a concept of “church.” Church is not simply a place where people go, but the way the people of God in Christ live as a community. A fresher and flatter concept of church as a missional community must begin to anchor in people’s imaginations.

Similarly, just as the concept of church must broaden so too must the practice of planting churches. Planting models can no longer rely on a core to crowd model that focuses on beautiful buildings in fast growing suburbs with large ministry budgets that emphasized worship and programmatic attendance. Instead, planting must look to the Book of Acts for a new paradigm of church that highlights a network of communities gathered in smaller groups across a city in the homes, coffee shops, bars, parks, or other gathering places of a given city.

Content Read: Kurt Fredrickson, PhD

Words: 295

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT

| | |
|--|---|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Chapter 1. THE GATEWAY CITY AND THE CHURCH OF THE PIONEERS | 7 |

PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW | 20 |
| Chapter 3. THE THEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE TO PLANT CHURCHES | 38 |

PART THREE: MINISTRY STRATEGY

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 4. A MINISTRY PLAN TOWARDS BECOMING A SENDING CHURCH | 56 |
| Chapter 5. IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING CULTURE CHANGE | 77 |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION | 92 |
|------------------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 98 |
|--------------|----|

PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Bonhomme Presbyterian Church in Chesterfield, MO will celebrate its bicentennial in 2016 by becoming a planting church. This project seeks to create a process that creates culture change and a sending ethos at Bonhomme. The project will chart a course to see Bonhomme become a sending church planting new churches throughout the St. Louis region.¹ These future church plants will be contextually appropriate and will engage four emerging sociological and demographic realities emerging in St. Louis. These sociological realities include: the exurban migration, the city's "Central Corridor" revitalization, the growing immigrant and refugee community in the city and county of St. Louis, and the marginalization and segregation of the urban poor in the city of St. Louis and the suburban poor in North St. Louis County.

This project is relevant not just for Bonhomme Presbyterian Church and St. Louis, but for the twenty-first century Church who finds itself in the midst of massive cultural change. With the shift from Modernity to Post-Modernity and from Christendom to Post-Christendom the Church must retool and rethink long held assumptions about ecclesiology and missiology. With each passing year fewer North Americans find attending church a relevant form of spirituality² and no longer ascribe positional authority

¹ East-West Gateway Council of Governments, *Where We Stand: The Strategic Assessment of the St. Louis Region* (Sixth Edition, 2011), 13. The East-West Gateway Council of Governments delineates the St. Louis region according to the "St. Louis MO-IL Metropolitan Statistical Area, as designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget in 2005." As the East-West Gateway Council indicates, the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of the city of St. Louis, MO, the Missouri counties of St. Louis, Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, St. Charles, Warren, and Lincoln counties. In addition, the Illinois counties of Calhoun, Jersey, Macoupin, Madison, St. Claire, and Monroe counties are also included in the statistical area. For the remainder of this project the term "St. Louis" will be used to refer to this entire statistical area. When speaking specifically of the city of St. Louis or St. Louis County this project will refer to these entities directly.

² Thom Rainer, "Six Ways Millennials Are Shaping the Church," <http://thomrainer.com/2013/12/11/six-ways-millennials-are-shaping-the-church> (accessed November 20, 2014).

to the institutional Church.³ As a result, the Church can no longer hold the expectation that culture is at least nominally Judeo-Christian. Therefore, the Church must learn to be sent out into the world to embody the love, grace, and mercy of God through Jesus Christ in the midst of the places where the men, women, and children of the twenty-first century live their lives. The Church must become a sending church, equipping its disciples to be salt and light to the people of the twenty-first century. Planting new churches is the most effective way to make new disciples of Jesus, experiment with new modalities of church, and help existing established churches experience renewal and revival.⁴ For the sake of the Church, this world, and most importantly the Kingdom of God, the Church must relearn its Biblical mandate to become a missional, sending church.

The first section of the project will examine the ministry context of the St. Louis region and Bonhomme Presbyterian Church. Bonhomme, the oldest Presbyterian Church west of the Mississippi, survived its near extinction in the 1950s and saw rapid growth in the 1990s with the development of a contemporary worship service and an attractional ministry model. Now, as Bonhomme's growth has plateaued⁵ and a vision to become missional has been cast, it seeks to transition towards a sending paradigm. This change will only occur through a thoughtful and intentional congregational conversation that identifies the Scriptures' imperative to plant churches, unpacks the changes that have occurred in the culture's shift to Post-Christendom and Post-Modernity, and casts a

³ David Fitch, *Prodigal Christianity* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013).

⁴ Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches" (New York: Redeemer City to City, 2009).

⁵ Presbyterian Mission Agency, "Ten Year Trends," apps.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/reports/20230/worship_attendance.jsp?format=bar_graphs (accessed October 15, 2015).

vision for Bonhomme's future in which church planting both grows the Kingdom and also serves as a catalyst for the revival and renewal of the existing congregation.

The second section will engage the theological rational and Biblical imperatives for planting churches. Birthed out of God's own mission and sending nature, the Church is sent in Jesus' name. As the Church is called to make disciples of all nations, the Church is also called to organize them into communities of accountability and faithfulness for encouragement, teaching, practicing the sacraments, and for missional sending. The people of God have always been "blessed to be a blessing"⁶ and are called to pour out their lives of covenantal faithfulness in the expansion of the Kingdom of God through the exponential replication of disciples through the exponential replication of churches.

The third section will provide strategy for the facilitation of this congregational culture change that includes a thorough congregational conversation facilitated through sermon series, classes, conferences, and small groups, the development and equipping of a leadership team to serve as catalysts for the culture change, and the articulation of a planting mission plan. The project will also provide metrics for assessing culture change such as measuring attendance at hosted planting conferences, the creation of a planting commission of the Session, and a congregational financial campaign to raise the necessary funds to launch a church planting movement.

Chapter 1 will examine the history of Bonhomme Presbyterian Church as the now 200-year-old "Church of the Pioneers" and Bonhomme's vision to become a planting church. In addition, these chapters will discuss the historical and demographic context of

⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 80-88.

St. Louis through the lens of Bonhomme's call to plant churches throughout the region and the contextual opportunities and challenges the region presents. Finally, Chapter 1 concludes by zeroing in on the Grove neighborhood that is a microcosm for the region at large, emblematic of the region's needs, including urban poverty and increasing cultural diversity, and will be the location of Bonhomme's first church plant.

Chapter 2 will examine relevant scholarly theological literature through a thorough study of the following works: *The Mission of God*, by Christopher Wright; *The Church and the Power of the Spirit*, by Jürgen Moltmann; *The Missional Church*, edited by Darrell L. Guder; *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, by Lesslie Newbigin; *Planting Missional Churches*, by Ed Stetzer; *Exponential*, by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson; and *The Forgotten Ways*, by Alan Hirsch. This chapter will note that both the Church's existence and its call to replicate stem from the Mission of God. The Mission of God calls the Church to be sent into the world, just as God is a sending God, the Church is called to be a sent and sending Church. The Church best lives into its sent nature by seeking to be an incarnational presence of the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God on earth. In order to fully live into its sent nature, the Church must understand and embrace its theological identity as God's anointed, elected for the purpose of mission and blessing to the nations. While firmly secure in its identity the Church must then think strategically and wisely about the nature of replicating leaders, communities, and even movements across a region. Finally, if the Church is to succeed in being not only a sending Church, but a Church that plants new churches that are able to be sustained for years to come, the Church must understand the cultural shifts of Post-Modernity and Post-Christendom and develop new paradigms of ministry that are culturally relevant.

Chapter 3 will explore the theological genesis of planting missional churches in God's own redemptive mission to all of creation. God's mission births the mission of the Church and just as God is a sending God, the Church is called to be a sending or planting church. This ecclesiological and theological foundation will serve as the chapter's basis to discuss Bonhomme's move away from an attractional, church-growth paradigm church towards a sending church paradigm as a church called to plant missional churches in a Post-Modern and Post-Christian cultural context.

In addition, Chapter 3 will present a theology of church planting based on the identity of the people of God as God's elect and based on the church's role in the ongoing mission of God. The chapter will explore why it is essential in a Post-Modern and Post-Christian context to adopt the mission of planting churches and move away from the Christendom-Attractional-Church-model. The chapter will focus on the Great Commission, and the Antioch Church of Acts 11-13 as examples of not just the Biblical imperative to plant churches, but also as examples of missional church culture change.

Chapter 4 will articulate a plan that begins with culture change within Bonhomme Presbyterian Church so that planting new churches becomes a normative and resourced part of her mission and ministry. This culture change within Bonhomme will be evaluated by the development and adoption of specific strategies. These strategies include the creation of a planting commission of the Session to ensure sustainable commitment and leadership to the mission of planting, the creation and adoption of a planting blueprint that will engage the people, places, and needs of St. Louis and articulate a plan to launch a regional movement, and, finally, the articulation of a mission plan for the first plant out of Bonhomme to the Grove neighborhood in the City of St. Louis.

Chapter 5 will describe a two-year process of evaluating the changing culture at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church so that church planting will be viewed as a normative part of her mission and ministry. The culture change will be catalyzed through a team-led congregational conversation and measured through the establishment of deliverables in existence only if the leadership and congregation have embraced the vision of becoming a planting church. These deliverables include a new commission of the Session to lead the ministry of planting churches and the congregation's willingness to resource the planting of churches through a church-wide Planting Resource Campaign. The goal of the campaign would be to raise upwards of \$1,000,000 to endow a sustainable and consistent mission of planting new churches every three to five years.

CHAPTER 1

THE GATEWAY CITY AND THE CHURCH OF THE PIONEERS

St. Louis is famous for its beer, baseball, and the Gateway Arch. Situated at the confluence of two of the continent's largest rivers, St. Louis has long been a city that has attracted people and has sent them out in adventure. Known as the Gateway City, Mound City, or even Arch City, St. Louis' place in American history is cemented largely because it represented the portal to further mystery, adventure, and intrigue. The pioneering spirit of Americans helped St. Louis develop into one of the nation's most historically significant cities.

To most, St. Louis' historical and cultural significance is often forgotten. Once the fourth largest city in the United States, St. Louis was the proposed site of a new relocated capital of the United States of America. The first kindergarten in the United States was founded in the city, the first ice cream cone and hot dog were both eaten in St. Louis, and the first Ferris Wheel was ridden in the Gateway City. Now St. Louis represents an often-overlooked Middle-American town that desperately needs to invent a new future for itself to overcome its decades-long Rust Belt decline and its problematic history of racial segregation and injustice.

From Boom Town to City in Decline

St. Louis has a rich legacy in American socio-political history. Founded by the French because of its strategic location on the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, St. Louis steadily grew into a prominent and then preeminent western frontier trading post. The two rivers birthed St. Louis' next foray into the annals of American history as Meriwether Lewis and William Clark began their western exploration of the Louisiana Purchase from the city and thus established St. Louis as the gateway to the West, launching dreams of Manifest Destiny. As Americans ventured west they passed through the city of St. Louis, some stayed long enough just to refuel before the westward trek, but others stayed longer, settling in St. Louis and contributing to St. Louis' rise as one of the largest and most important American cities at the turn of the twentieth century.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, St. Louis was known as the fourth city and was in fact the fourth largest city in the young United States. In 1870 St. Louis' population was 310,000 leaving only New York, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn as cities larger than St. Louis, while other influential cities like Baltimore and Boston had smaller populations than St. Louis. By 1880 just ten years later, Chicago's population skyrocketed and surpassed St. Louis by 40,000 people.¹ This shift in population growth evidenced a trend that would continue to be exhibited over the course of the next century.

Racial Injustice and Urban Decline

Through the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO and the ensuing race riots, the world has seen first hand the stark and devastating racial segregation and injustice

¹ James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley* (Saint Louis, MO: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998), 272.

that systemically grips St. Louis.² This injustice, into which the Church is called, has its roots in St. Louis' past. In the first quarter of the twentieth century racial tension in St. Louis began to mount. As prejudice and racism grew there were new legislative attempts to legally mandate the segregation of the races prohibiting people of color from living in white neighborhoods and designating certain neighborhoods for people of color.³ While a law was passed that legally mandated neighborhood racial segregation it was later overturned in the Supreme Court with the legal backing of the NAACP. However, while this law failed to become legally binding, the city of St. Louis embraced "private but legally enforceable restrictive covenants against selling houses to blacks."⁴ This practice served to create de-facto segregation.

Segregation and bigotry continued to have a negative impact on the city of St. Louis. As the entire nation sought to recover from the Great Depression, the citizens of the city of St. Louis fought to find meaningful work. African-Americans again found themselves the targets of oppression and racism as "blacks were being fired in wholesale lots...to be replaced by white workers."⁵ This continued to further strain the economic viability of a de-facto segregated city. As the twentieth century progressed the St. Louis region saw a wave of affluent and mobile whites migrate from the city out into the suburbs.⁶ The census of 1940 marked the first population decline in 120 years for the

² *This American Life*, 2015. "The Problem We All Live With," by Nikole Hannah-Jones. Aired July 31 on NPR.

³ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 413-414.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 414.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 441.

⁶ *This American Life*, 2015.

city of St. Louis. As the wealthy whites of St. Louis moved west to the suburbs the city suffered again from its de-facto segregationist policies as the city of St. Louis now boasted the highest number of substandard housing units among the nation's twelve largest metropolitan areas.⁷ The trend of urban neglect and suburban migration continued with the passage of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 allowing returning World War II veterans to purchase new homes in the newly constructed and segregated suburbs.⁸

During the 1950s the city of St. Louis built five new "major low-rent housing projects."⁹ The projects included Cochran Gardens, Darst-Webbe, Vaughn Apartments, and the most infamous, Pruitt-Igoe.¹⁰ The government funded housing projects failed to provide an adequate environment for its residents to thrive. They were built in a utilitarian, characterless fashion, they failed to contain adequate green space for children to run and play, they were not close to shopping or health services, public transportation or significant job opportunities.¹¹ The urban poor found themselves further isolated and segregated.

The residents of the St. Louis urban housing projects who had the resources to relocate did. Middle-class African-Americans now joined the suburban exodus as they sought to relocate from the marginalized urban core of St. Louis to the northern, inner-

⁷ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 446.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 461.

¹⁰ *The Pruitt Igoe Myth*, directed by Chad Freidrichs (New York: First Run Features, 2011, DVD).

¹¹ Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 461.

ring suburbs of Normandy, Ferguson, and Wellston.¹² Indicative of the racism and prejudice prevalent in the region, the African-American suburban migration to the inner-ring suburbs triggered a new round of “white flight” as white residents of the inner-ring suburbs fled to the newly emerging outer suburbs.¹³ Entire communities in North St. Louis County fell subject to “block-busting” as real-estate agents and developers sought to scare white residents into selling properties at a loss at the threat of racial minorities moving into these communities. Not only did this cause a new round of suburban white flight, but it served to diminish property values of entire communities and neighborhoods that were inhabited primarily by African-Americans.¹⁴

Interestingly, while the general white population fled these communities, the power structures remained white. Local governance, commerce, and law enforcement remained largely white. As a result, the new African-American residents found themselves at odds with the established white power structures. This has been painfully evident in the recent Ferguson, MO race riots.

The city of St. Louis continues to fight this trend of suburban migration and urban neglect to this day. According to the 2010 Census, St. Louis remains the largest metropolitan region in the state of Missouri and the seventeenth largest metropolitan area in the United States with a total population of 2,812,896 people.¹⁵ While the region grew by 114,209 people, the population growth continues to shift away from the city of St.

¹² *This American Life*, 2015.

¹³ Andrew Kasberg. 2015. Interview by author. St. Louis, MO. January 22, 2015.

¹⁴ *This American Life*, 2015.

¹⁵ *Where We Stand*, 14.

Louis, and now also has shifted beyond the boundaries of St. Louis County. The city of St. Louis saw an 8 percent decline in its population losing 29,000 people and part of St. Louis' marginalized north city neighborhoods lost "more than 20 percent."¹⁶ St. Louis County, once the recipient of the population exodus from the city, saw its population "drop by 1.7 percent to below 1 million people."¹⁷ The city's population represents its lowest "since the late 19th century."¹⁸ The census numbers also revealed yet a new white flight migration now to the far-flung exurbs. Both the city and county of St. Louis saw their white population drop 8 percent and 10 percent respectively. Exurban communities in St. Charles and Jefferson Counties are seeing major population increases as white, middle-class families are choosing to commute further into work for newer homes on larger properties with the perception of better, newer schools and safer neighborhoods.¹⁹

Nearly 30 percent of African-Americans living in St. Louis are at or below the poverty level compared to just 8 percent of white residents in St. Louis. African-American infants suffer a mortality rate of 17.2 percent while white infants have a mortality rate of 4.6 percent. While unemployment in the region remains higher than national averages, the white unemployment rate is 9 percent and the African-American unemployment rate is twice that at 18.4 percent. Nearly 20 percent of African-Americans

¹⁶ Doug Moore, "Census Shows City is 'Hollowing Out.'" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 25, 2011.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Richard Florida, "The Search for Affordable Housing is Pushing the Middle Class to the Exurbs," *The Atlantic*, <http://theatlanticcities.com/housing/2014/04/search-affordable-housing-pushing-middle-class-exurbs/8816/> (accessed April 23, 2014).

in St. Louis have less than a high school education while only 9.7 percent of whites do. Sociological data indicates, “blacks are three times more likely to be in poverty.”²⁰

Suburban Poverty and Urban Revival

With the majority of the African-American community segregated to the north sections of the city and county, localizing the region’s most troubling pockets of poverty and economic injustice, there is increasing evidence that the city of St. Louis is beginning to see a gentrified Urban Revival. St. Louis’ urban “Central Corridor” is seeing economic and residential investment and development.²¹ The Central Corridor describes a region of the city of St. Louis demarked by I-170 to the west, Delmar Boulevard to the north, the Mississippi River to the east, and I-44 to the south.²² Nestled within this region are some of St. Louis’ prime attractions, foundational business institutions, and great urban neighborhoods. In the Central Corridor one can find Forest Park, the Gateway Arch, Washington University, Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Saint Louis University, the Grove, and the Central West End.²³

The Central Corridor’s redevelopment is largely being driven by the Cortex Business Park, a venture between Washington University in St. Louis, Barnes Jewish Hospital, Saint Louis University, the Missouri Botanical Gardens, and Monsanto. The Cortex seeks to become an innovation hub for science and medical technology and

²⁰ *Where We Stand*, 72.

²¹ Tim Bryant, “Anchors and Transit Spur Growth of St. Louis Corridor,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/anchors-and-transit-spur-growth-of-st-louis-corridor/article_f095688e-11b9-5819-9bc7-14292595c47a.html (accessed May 26, 2014).

²² Bryant, “Anchors and Transit Spur Growth of St. Louis Corridor.”

²³ *Ibid.*

innovation seeking to cement St. Louis as a world leader in plant sciences.²⁴ In addition, the Cortex seeks to attract entrepreneurs and is focused on creating small business hubs and innovation centers.²⁵ The Cortex has already spawned massive public works improvements including a newly reconstructed and redesigned I-64 that serves as the city's central artery. New housing stock is being constructed and additional infrastructure like medical facilities and retail is relocating to the area. Ikea just recently announced it would be building a new facility in the midst of the Central Corridor. Once forgotten and dilapidated urban neighborhoods like the Grove and Forest Park Southeast are now seeing revitalization and economic and residential growth.

Growing International Immigrant and Refugee Relocation

St. Louis has always been a city in the United States that has welcomed immigrants and refugees and has always had a larger than average population of “foreign-born” residents.²⁶ On the eve of the Civil War, St. Louis boasted the largest foreign-born population in the United States. In 1900 the city of St. Louis no longer led the nation in this population but still had a considerably sized community and ranked “seventh amongst the twenty-five largest American cities in number of foreign born.”²⁷

This historical trend has continued through the years as St. Louis has long been home to international immigrant and refugee relocations. Currently, St. Louis ranks second in the nation (behind the Twin Cities) in per capita refugee relocation

²⁴ Bryant, “Anchors and Transit Spur Growth of St. Louis Corridor.”

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Primm, *Lion in the Valley*, 338-339.

²⁷ Ibid.

population.²⁸ The United States government and other intra-governmental agencies such as the International Institute relocate many international refugees in St. Louis because St. Louis is the cheapest city in the United States for these refugees to be relocated.²⁹ As such, many St. Louis neighborhoods read as a history of geo-political crisis and instability. Bosnians who relocated in the 1990s and made the Bevo Mills neighborhood home, have been joined by Ethiopians and Eritreans in the early 2000s, and they are both being joined by an increasing Iranian, Iraqi, and Afghani refugee population.

Bonhomme Presbyterian Church History and Future

Bonhomme Presbyterian Church is the oldest, continually active Presbyterian Church west of the Mississippi River. Salmon Giddings, the nineteenth century missionary and church planter founded Bonhomme when he was sent from his Presbytery in New England in the winter of 1816. He journeyed on horse back across the Appalachian Mountains to the frontier outpost of St. Louis. From the city he then ventured some twenty miles west, to the edge of the settled world, and planted the new church that originally met in his own log cabin.³⁰

Bonhomme faced a congregational crisis during the 1940s and 1950s. Membership had dwindled to a mere three people and worship services were held only during the summer months.³¹ In 1955 one of the three members, Annie Yokel, died and

²⁸ Worku Geremew, Director of Rise Together Ministries. 2011. Interview by author. St. Louis. February 8, 2011.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Bonhomme, "Our Past," http://www.bonhomme.tv/who_we_are/past/index.php (accessed November 11, 2014).

³¹ Ibid.

donated a sum of money that allowed for the purchase of a new piece of property and the building of modern facilities upon the new property.³² The new property and facilities served to jump-start the ministry of Bonhomme Presbyterian Church and the church began to grow significantly.³³ Bonhomme grew to a membership of nearly 2,000 people in the early 1990s, but since has seen a slow, but steady decline in membership and worship attendance.³⁴

Bonhomme operates largely as an attractional, Christendom church offering traditional worship, contemporary worship, pastoral care, and Spiritual Formation programming for children, youth, and adults. Christian Education remains a priority through a heavily emphasized Sunday School ministry that offers classes for children, youth, and adults. Bonhomme's contemporary worship service is popular with the suburban young families who live in the contiguous "West County" suburbs and many send their children to the highly regarded Bonhomme Preschool.

The church in general has been experiencing a slow loss of membership and worship attendance, which has not necessarily created a sense of panic, but a sense of questioning amongst church leadership.³⁵ Most solutions to fix this problem have centered on attractional church strategies and have included offering new small groups and adding a Saturday night contemporary worship service. While these decisions have

³² Bonhomme, "Our Past."

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Presbyterian Mission Agency, "Ten Year Trends," apps.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/reports/20230/membership.jsp?format=bar_graph (accessed October 16, 2015).

³⁵ Presbyterian Mission Agency, "Ten Year Trends."

more cultural resonance, these movements are still made from the heart of an attractional Christendom model of church.

Bonhomme has embraced a new vision of becoming a planting church, seeking to plant new forms of missional community that will represent the next chapter of ministry in Bonhomme's 200-year history. Planting new missional communities will not only serve to create new communities, but it will create a new culture of experimentation within the existing congregation that will embrace new paradigms for ministry amidst the Post-Modern generation and context of St. Louis. This experimentation will serve to season and infect the larger congregation with elements of this paradigmatic shift. This shift in ministry paradigm is not a reaction to culture from a dying church, but seeks to be hermeneutically appropriate and proactive for a church encountering a changing missional context.³⁶ By planting new missional communities and churches, Bonhomme will be investing in a research and development wing of the church that will innovate new modalities of ministry that resonate within Post-Modern culture. These newly developed innovations will serve to inspire, ignite, and reinvigorate the rest of the congregation's mission and ministry.

Bonhomme's celebration of its bicentennial in 2016 will serve as an occasion to not only celebrate Bonhomme's heritage and history of being planted by the pioneering church planting missionary, Salmon Giddings, and of being the oldest Presbyterian Church west of the Mississippi River, but also as a new opportunity to innovate new ways of doing mission and ministry that will continue to leave a legacy of faith for future generations. In an attempt to honor Bonhomme's missional heritage, for its bicentennial

³⁶ Ray Anderson, *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 60-77.

the Session of Bonhomme Presbyterian Church has endorsed a missional vision, Vision 2016. Vision 2016 calls for Bonhomme to be both internally vibrant and externally focused with specific missional goals to help assure an external and missional focus. One of these missional goals is the desire to become a planting church and launch a church planting movement throughout St. Louis. As the demographic and contextual study of St. Louis has indicated, a planting movement that seeks to participate in God's ongoing mission of restoration and redemption in St. Louis must seek to be an agent of racial healing, reconciliation, and unity in the midst of regional racial injustice, should advocate for the Kingdom's expansion and the planting of new churches in the far exurbs of newly relocated populations, and seek to plant churches of and for all nations amongst the increasing refugee populations in the city.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The genesis of planting missional communities is God's own redemptive mission to all of creation. The *Missio Dei* births the mission of the Church and just as God is a sending God, the Church is called to be a sending or planting Church. Through examination of seven scholarly theological sources: *The Mission of God*, by Christopher Wright; *The Church and the Power of the Spirit*, by Jürgen Moltmann; *The Missional Church*, edited by Darrell L. Guder; *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, by Lesslie Newbigin; *Planting Missional Churches*, by Ed Stetzer; *Exponential*, by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson; and *The Forgotten Ways*, by Alan Hirsch this chapter will examine not only how the Church's existence and its purpose stem from the *Missio Dei*, but how the Church's purpose, to be sent into the world, is best fulfilled through planting contextually appropriate reproducing churches that emphasize the development and deployment of new leaders.

The Mission of God; The Genesis of the Church's Mission to Plant New Churches

The Mission of God, Christopher Wright

In his book, *The Mission of God*, Christopher Wright provides a "missional

hermeneutic” unlocking and tracing the Bible’s grand narrative of God’s systematic mission with God’s creation in general and humanity in particular. In the beginning God creates freely and generously so that all of creation would experience life in God’s presence and in the knowledge and worship of YHWH as true God.¹ Sin enters and the knowledge of YHWH as God and the worship of YHWH as true God dissipates and is replaced with a life of idolatry and false worship; the true God is neither known nor worshiped.² Into this pluralistic maze God calls Abraham, making a covenant with him to both bless him, and his future descendants by making them God’s unique covenant people and also, through Abraham’s descendants, to bless the entire world³ by living a uniquely different life of mercy and justice that will be a sign of YHWH’s truthful existence and will be what draws the nations to Zion, God’s Holy Mountain and the worship of God.⁴

Out of Israel God promises a Messiah will come, who is God’s anointed and who is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic blessing.⁵ Jesus comes as the Christ, the seed of Abraham, the literal fulfillment of God’s promise to bless Israel and the nations through Abraham’s descendants and incorporates the Gentile nations into God’s deliverance, redemption and restoration offered to Israel. Israel, God’s covenant people, is now defined as those who enjoy the promises of God’s fulfilled covenant, but are no longer

¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 75.

² Ibid., 139.

³ Ibid., 194.

⁴ Ibid., 227.

⁵ Ibid., 106.

incorporated via birth, but via faith in Jesus as God's anointed.⁶ The New Israel, which Jesus has established, is composed of both Jew and Gentile. The church is the embodiment of the new Israel, God's holy and chosen people, blessed to be a blessing, incorporated into Israel through the Messiah and called to bless the nations by proclaiming the new realized hope of incorporation for all, Jew and Greek, who would confess faith in Jesus Christ.⁷

Wright's missional reading of the Scriptures reveals that God's grand purpose and mission is for all of creation to know God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the true God and to worship Trinity as the true God. In other words, the Church's missional *telos* as found in Matthew 28:19 is to "make disciples of all nations." While Wright's work lays the theological foundation for the mission of the Church, he fails to connect and make explicit the Church's work of planting new churches as uniquely effective at fulfilling the Church's mission. Other scholarship, most notably Timothy Keller, J. Allen Thompson, and Ed Stetzer posit church planting is the most effective way of making new disciples of Christ. If planting new churches is the most effective method of making new disciples of Christ, and disciples of Christ are those who both know and worship the Trinity as true God, and if the Church's mission as birthed by the *Missio Dei* is to make new disciples, then planting new churches is the most significant way churches can fulfill their mission and participate in the *Missio Dei*.⁸ Thus, the call to become a sending church by planting new missional communities stems from the *Missio Dei* itself and is necessary for the

⁶ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 387.

⁷ Ibid., 501.

⁸ Keller, "Why Plant Churches."

Church to fulfill its purpose in participating in the Mission of God.

Church Planting from a Missional and Reformed Perspective

The Church in the Power of the Spirit, Jürgen Moltmann

Jürgen Moltmann famously stated in his work, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, “it is not that the church ‘has’ a mission, but the very reverse: that the mission of Christ creates its own Church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood.”⁹ For this reason Moltmann concludes the Church ought to be known as a “Missionary Church” and the Church exists because God is a loving God who desires that all of creation know and worship the true God.¹⁰ God’s love has been manifested in the coming of Jesus Christ and offered to the world through friendship with Christ.¹¹ The Church’s mission as recorded in Acts 1:8 is to then extend this friendship with God through Jesus Christ to all the people throughout “the ends of the earth.”¹²

The Church is the people of God made friends with God by the coming of Jesus Christ.¹³ The Church practices friendship with God in Christ through its life and practice of prayer¹⁴ and is called to missionally extend God’s offered friendship to the world in

⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 10.

¹⁰ Ibid., 7.

¹¹ Ibid., 119.

¹² Ibid., 121.

¹³ Ibid., 119.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Jesus Christ by “incarnat[ing the] hope” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ As Christ’s friends, the Church offers and extends friendship to others in the name of Christ¹⁶ and with the missional purpose of not simply self-propagation, but to “liberate all people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

When the Church offers the incarnational friendship with Christ of the *Missio Dei* it is a “sign,” “instrument,” and “in-breaking” of Christ’s Lordship in the midst of a world that is isolated from God.¹⁸ Through its practices the Church makes tangible friendship with Christ and makes present the Kingdom of God on earth.¹⁹ Proclaiming the Gospel, practicing the sacraments, corporately gathering as the Church, and practicing the mercy and justice of God to the poor display Christ’s Lordship on the earth and friendship with Christ is offered.²⁰ Moltmann concludes that the missional church is, therefore, sent by God not to establish programs or to offer works of charity, but rather to incarnate the presence of Christ in the world through friendship and fellowship.²¹

Moltmann’s Scriptural reading and theological insights have been central to the missional church movement. His observation that first and foremost the Church is called to befriend the world by extending friendship with God through Christ to all of creation is a central facet of missional theology. Moltmann constantly implores the Church to move

¹⁵ Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 84.

¹⁶ Ibid., 121.

¹⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁸ Ibid., 293.

¹⁹ Ibid., 307.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 357.

outside itself, its buildings, and its programs urging the Church to move away from an attractional ministry paradigm and to embrace a “sent” paradigm.

Moltmann is right to conclude that the most central act of worship and mission for the missional church is extending the friendship of God through Jesus Christ to the world, the Church must continually discern the most theologically sound, Biblically faithful, and contextually effective ways of offering God’s friendship. Moltmann highlights several important practices of the Church that help to embody the love, grace, and mercy of God in Jesus Christ and these practices of the Church must be appropriately contextualized for the context of the local Church. As Allen Thompson suggests planting new churches is the most effective way to assure a contextually appropriate approach to ministry.²² Furthermore, Thompson further asserts that church plants are the most effective way to extend the Gospel into new and different cultures and tribes of people and is therefore the most effective way to extend the offer of friendship with God through Jesus Christ to new people and places.²³ Though Moltmann never specifically mentions planting new churches as a significant work of the church in its faithfulness to the *Missio Dei*, it is clear that if the Church is to remain faithful to its missional nature it must plant new churches.

Missional Church, Darrell Guder, ed.

The Church is called to be a sent people because God is a sending God. Trinitarian theology is at the root of missional theology. Guder, referencing David

²² Timothy Keller and J. Allen Thompson, *Church Planter Manual* (New York: Redeemer Church Planting Center, 2002), 30.

²³ Keller and Thompson, *Church Planter Manual*, 30.

Bosch's work, *Transforming Mission*, identifies the sending nature of the Trinity: God the Father sends the Son into the world; God the Father and God the Son send the Holy Spirit to be present with the Church after Christ's resurrection and ascension; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit then send the Church out into the world.²⁴ This "leads us to see the church as the instrument of God's mission...and that the Church of Jesus Christ is not the purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness."²⁵

The Church must be challenged to become truly missional. Truly becoming missional means the Church must not think of mission just as a church program, but for the church "...to redefine [itself] as missionary by [its] very nature" and to "...see [its] own context as [its] mission."²⁶ When the Church lives accordingly, then it faithfully fulfills its theological and Biblical identity as "the people of God who are called and sent to re-present the reign of God."²⁷

The call to re-present the reign of God is both passive and active. Passively, the Church is called to be a "sign and a foretaste" of the "divine reign."²⁸ Actively, the Church is called to be an "agent and instrument" of the reign of God by practicing and "engaging in the practices of the divine reign" like the offering of forgiveness.²⁹ The

²⁴ Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 5.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 7.

²⁷ Ibid., 15.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Church represents the reign of God as the community that enfleshes God's reign,³⁰ as the servant "to God's passion for the world's life,"³¹ and as the messenger that "announces the authority" of God's reign.³² When the Church faithfully represents the reign of God it acts as "the sign of the Messiah's coming."³³

To be the sent people of the *Missio Dei*, God calls the Church to move beyond a Christendom modality and extend into the nooks and crannies of culture and society. The sending Church must seek to equip and train people to be hospitable, invitational, and radically gracious to all the people in their *oikos*.³⁴ The Greek word *oikos*, often translated as household, represents far more than those within one's nuclear family or living under one's roof, but in one's relational orbit.³⁵ Guder asserts that because God is a sending God, the Church must be a sent people who seek to represent the reign of God to everyone in its *oikos*. Transforming church culture from attractional to missional is essential for faithful participation in the *Missio Dei*. The planting of new churches and new missional communities remains an important practice of the work of creating a missional culture and sending ethos within a congregation.

³⁰ Guder, 103-104.

³¹ Ibid., 104-106.

³² Ibid., 106-108.

³³ Ibid., 108.

³⁴ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 163-168.

³⁵ Ibid.

The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, Lesslie Newbigin

In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* Lesslie Newbigin hypothesizes that the Church's missional calling begins with claiming the Church's rightful identity, as God's people called and elected by God to be God's unique covenantal people.³⁶ In the midst of a world with competing religious views, theologies, epistemologies, and ontologies the most effective missional witness the Church has to the Kingdom of God is understanding and living into its identity as the people of God. Newbigin reminds that it is the Church's knowledge of its identity as God's elect that will shape the character of the Church's life, marking it as set apart from the world with a different and unique worldview, mission, vision, and values.³⁷ The Church is called to dwell within a self-understanding as God's elect and to allow the narrative of its election to shape its mission in the world.³⁸

Therefore, the Church's self-understanding of its election will be what births the Church's missional calling to live while identifying Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as true God and to live according to the *Missio Dei* and according to the God who "has acted and is acting" and God's purposes for all of creation.³⁹ The heart of the Church's mission is to be sent out into the world to fully and faithfully live into its identity as God's covenant people in the midst of the nations out of the joy and gratitude of being the recipients of God's grace because when the Church lives according to its identity as the people of God then the *Missio Dei* is embodied on the earth.⁴⁰

³⁶ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 1-26.

³⁷ Ibid., 38.

³⁸ Ibid., 49.

³⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 116.

Newbigin's missional reading of the doctrine of election reveals that it is God who always takes the initiative in salvation, and the Scriptures recount that it is always through inclusion in the community of God (Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament) in which others participate in the salvation of God because the truth of God's love, grace, and mercy is always conveyed incarnationally through relationships within the community of faith.⁴¹ "God's saving revelation of himself does not come to us straight down from above - through the skylight...God's saving revelation [comes when we] open the door to the neighbor whom he sends as his appointed messenger."⁴² To be elect is not to be equated with those who alone are saved, but "election means to be incorporated into [God's] mission to the world...to be the sign and the agent and the first fruit of his blessed kingdom which is for all...to take our share in his suffering, to bear the scars of the passion."⁴³

Few theological concepts are more misunderstood than that of election. Often election is understood to mean the selection of a certain privileged few for salvation while the un-elect or reprobate are damned to an eternity outside God's presence. However, Lesslie Newbigin articulates a missional and Biblical understanding of election. God's election first of Israel and then of the Church was not for the salvation of a privileged few, but election is the costly call of God's covenant people to live according to the ways and to extend the love and friendship of God to all. In other words, election means that the Church has been blessed to be a blessing to those who are far from God.

⁴¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 82-83.

⁴² Ibid., 82-83.

⁴³ Ibid., 87.

The Church has been called and chosen to give itself away, to suffer, and to labor so that those who are far from God would be brought near. The unique call as God's covenant people does not entail an easy life akin to the false theology of the prosperity Gospel movement, but a life of obedience, devotion, and discipleship, a life of high accountability and expectation to live according to the Kingdom of God and to exist so others, the nations, those far from God would experience the same blessing of God.

The Church exists to bless others and exists not for its own self-preservation, but for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. The planting of new churches tangibly and visibly embodies this great theological truth of being sent. There is no clearer example of a sent church, then a church that gives of its resources and its people to make necessary sacrifices to see the Kingdom of God grow and expand through the planting of new churches.

Becoming a Missional Sending Church

With a theological foundation established through the works of Christopher Wright, Jürgen Moltmann, Darrell Guder, and Lesslie Newbigin it is now time to practically and strategically evaluate the elements necessary for a congregation to become missional and embrace a sending ministry paradigm. Dave and John Ferguson, Ed Stetzer, and Alan Hirsch will help articulate the process of creating and ensuring a sustainable sending ethos within a local congregation.

Exponential, Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson

Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson assert that each local congregation has the Spirit empowered ability (and perhaps calling) to start a missional church planting movement. In *Exponential*, the Fergusons delineate a developmental reproduction strategy that calls for congregations to first reproduce small groups, then reproduce corporate worship services, next reproduce campuses, then reproduce churches, and finally reproduce networks.⁴⁴ In addition to this developmental reproduction strategy, the Fergusons posit their principles of reproduction that begin with the development of apprentices,⁴⁵ requires a “proactive, not reactive” posture to reproduction,⁴⁶ commits to assuring apprentice-leaders are ready to begin a new ministry,⁴⁷ displays a strong willingness to grow the Kingdom of God and not the local congregation,⁴⁸ and embodies a willingness to allow the impetus to reproduce churches to come from the edges and margins of the congregation as well as the central and established leadership structure.⁴⁹ This reproduction strategy ensures an incremental and developmental approach to reproducing leaders and growing a local congregation that ensures sustainability since each progression is predicated upon completion of prerequisite leadership competencies and practices.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson, *Exponential* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 24-29.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 29.

Central to becoming a planting church is a systematic and stair-stepped leadership path. For the Fergusons, this leadership path begins first when an individual becomes an apprentice of another leader in the community. Next, the apprentice becomes a leader having learned from their leader, they are now ready to lead their own small group. Third, the leader now becomes a coach who is apprenticing and coaching and leading others to become leaders and coaching other leaders. Fourth, the coach becomes a director and assumes more administrative and programmatic responsibilities in the life of the church in addition to the relational and equipping responsibilities already embraced as a coach and leader. Lastly, the director is then commissioned to either plant a new congregation or serve as a pastor on staff of the congregation.⁵¹ Along each step of the leadership journey, the developing leader is intentionally equipped along the way by following a rhythm of leadership development and reflection that allows opportunity to observe, reflect, practice, and then lead on one's own.⁵² In addition to reproducing leaders, congregations should look to reproduce small groups and communities. If a congregation is able to reproduce multiple small groups this provides a blue print to reproduce congregations and to send others out in mission.⁵³

Dave and Jon Ferguson provide an immensely practical and strategic resource for becoming a sending church by focusing on leadership development and sending. Ironically, while the Fergusons are able to articulate such a comprehensive strategy for leadership development in the missional church, their ecclesiology remains disappointingly attractional. The leaders who the Fergusons are developing and

⁵¹ Ferguson and Ferguson, *Exponential*, 30-37.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 63.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

producing are expected to plug back into an attractional paradigm of Community Christian Church's multi-site, mega-church model. While this leadership development thrust is a helpful element in the process of leading culture change within a congregation and embracing a sending ethos, the Fergusons' vision of church is not missional enough. Churches that wish to become truly missional and embrace a sending ethos in the midst of the Post-Modern and Post-Christian twenty-first century must seek to not only recruit, train, and commission leaders, but equip them for leading fresh expressions of church that are just as likely to be found in coffee shops, playgrounds, family rooms, and back yards as they are the multi-million dollar campus of a multi-site, mega-church.

Planting Missional Churches, Ed Stetzer

Ed Stetzer's book, *Planting Missional Churches*, seeks to provide theological and Biblical rationale for planting. Stetzer contends that church planting must be indigenous as context will always shape the mission and ministry of a local church plant. While it is possible to state values and practices that can be held by all church plants, great care must be taken to make sure good best practices and sound instruction on planting never usurp Christ's call for the Church to be incarnationally appropriate to its specific context.⁵⁴ These indigenous plants must shift away from the traditional "core to crowd" method of church planting towards more "house or relation-based churches, missional/incarnational churches, and emerging churches."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 1-3.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 152-181.

Disappointingly, while Stetzer briefly touches on a missional “*koinos*,”⁵⁶ expression of church, the word he uses to describe an Acts-like house church that “function[s] completely by face-to-face relationship,”⁵⁷ the majority of *Planting Missional Churches* reads as a text book or a how-to-manual for planting churches that still predominately draws from the attractional Christendom paradigm model known as core-to-crowd where a planting congregation commissions dozens of its own church families and members to begin worshiping at a new location with a new pastor. Such instruction is ironic given his own impassioned and firm insistence that this model must be replaced. Stetzer himself readily admits in this book, this model of church planting is increasingly less effective, but must be replaced with a more missional or *koinos* expression of church planting that is more closely akin to the first-century house church movement depicted in the Book of Acts, but he is unable to provide any helpful instruction in the formation of these new worshipping communities. This is partly due to the fact that these ancient-new⁵⁸ *koinos* church plants are so different and so contextual they are even hard to describe, depict, or explicate in a book.

While Stetzer’s work inevitably draws heavily from older models, he does provide some helpful exegesis of contemporary Post-Modern and Post-Christian culture and his willingness to describe sociological movements in a changing culture will help congregations that wish to embrace a sending ethos. Again, while there is no magic solution provided in Stetzer’s book for planting churches, through reading *Planting Missional Churches*, congregations can see a clearly depicted Post-Christian, Post-

⁵⁶ Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 170-181.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 170.

⁵⁸ Robert Webber, *Ancient Future Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 19.

Modern context and invite the Spirit into dreaming Kingdom dreams and visions that will uniquely meet the needs of their own community. In addition to Stetzer's, *Planting Missional Churches*, congregations that truly want to embrace a sending ethos and plant missional churches should read *Starting New Worshiping Communities* developed by Brian Clark, Jan Edmiston, Shannon Kiser, Phillip Lotspeich, Lisa Mears, Vera White, and Craig Williams. This resource leads a leadership team through the process of missional discernment and experimentation as it seeks to develop new worshiping communities to serve as fresh expressions of church for this changed cultural context.

The Forgotten Ways, Alan Hirsch

As the Church embraces a sending ethos and understands itself called to participate in the *Missio Dei*, Alan Hirsch in his book, *The Forgotten Ways*, provides a framework that breaks the Christendom and Modern tendencies of the Attractional Church. Hirsch provides a helpful rubric for establishing a missional paradigm. This missional paradigm provides a framework for helping local congregations apply sending values and best practices incarnationally in their own contexts.

Hirsch asserts that one of the biggest challenges facing the twenty-first century church and providing the Church's greatest need to reimagine itself missionally is the "neo-tribalization" of peoples into localized, specialized, and highly contextualized social communities that prohibits the "one-size fits all approach to Church" that the institutional, Modern church birthed.⁵⁹ To become truly missional and faithful to its mission to participate in the *Missio Dei* the Church must distance itself from the attractional model of church that flourished in the 1990s.

⁵⁹Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 32.

As the Church is called to become missional by participating in the *Missio Dei* and sent into the world, the Church will need to reimagine its organizing principles. In addition, the Church must begin to replace attractional metrics like worship service attendance, Sunday School participation, and large youth group offerings with more “incarnational” communities of people gathered together around a common mission, vision, and values and practicing the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁶⁰ The Church does this when it activates what Hirsch calls Missional DNA (mDNA)⁶¹ and proclaims Christ as Lord,⁶² emphasizes the ministry of discipleship,⁶³ has an “incarnational impulse”⁶⁴ to embed ministry in relationships in the culture, establishes a leadership culture that is “organic”⁶⁵ and flat and develops apostolic leaders,⁶⁶ and has a sense of community around the mission of Jesus.⁶⁷

Not only does Hirsch provide an extensive sociological study of Post-Modern, Post-Christendom, but he also helpfully unpacks the inherent values, systems, and narratives of the Christendom Church. But perhaps Hirsch’s most helpful addition to the missional conversation is his identification of the six elements of mDNA. There is no doubt that churches that want to adjust mission and ministry to the changed twenty-first century context can find in Hirsch’s six elements biblically faithful and culturally astute

⁶⁰ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 32-48.

⁶¹ Ibid., 18.

⁶² Ibid., 83-100.

⁶³ Ibid., 101-126.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 127-148.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 179-216.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 149-178.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 217-242.

expressions of mission. Perhaps most helpfully, Hirsch does not attempt to explicitly spell out for local congregations the best and only way to appropriate mDNA in their local contexts. The six elements of mDNA are offered as values, and elements of a necessary paradigm shift, but the local congregation must do the hard work of translating and applying these six elements to their local congregational and cultural context. For example, while Hirsch affirms the Biblical centrality and cultural importance of a ministry of discipleship, the local church must figure out the best way to begin to effectively disciple others and equip them to become disciplers themselves. *The Forgotten Ways* is most helpful in the room it leaves for local congregations to experiment and implement in their own communities and traditions.

The *Forgotten Ways*, and specifically the six elements of mDNA, provide a foundation for both leading culture change within an established congregation and also a paradigm for mission within a new church plant. A church that desires to become a sending church would do well to study *The Forgotten Ways* and discern the best ways to apply and incorporate the elements of mDNA into its existing ministry. The elements of mDNA would serve to leaven the established, attractional church culture and aid in the culture change process. Furthermore, the six elements of mDNA serve as important scaffolding for an emerging church plant looking for clarity on how to reach out in incarnational relationships and organize a budding ministry.

CHAPTER 3

THE THEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE TO PLANT CHURCHES

The Church of Jesus Christ is called to be a mission-shaped church. It is the *Missio Dei* that has given birth to the Church calling it into existence and creating the Church's identity and purpose. The purpose of the *Missio Dei* then is the same purpose and mission of the Church - that all men and women would rightly know and understand God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as true God, and would worship God in Spirit and in truth.¹ The Church exists to fulfill the *Missio Dei* and to incarnate Christ's mission of extending the love, grace, reconciliation, and redemption of God to a spiritually orphaned, isolated, and alienated world. The *Missio Dei* birthed the Incarnation of Christ and Christ's Incarnation and subsequent commission to the Church births the Church's ministry of being an incarnational presence. As culture changes and the twenty-first century cultural context of North America shifts away from Modernity and into Post-Modernity and away from Christendom and into Post-Christendom, not only are new ministry paradigms necessary for the Church to remain relevant in its mission and ministry, but the Church must also reinvest in its Biblically mandated call to plant new churches.

¹ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 74.

The Book of Acts recounts the ministry of church planting to be a central means the Church of Jesus Christ participates in the *Missio Dei*. Through an explosive church planting movement in the first century, the early church witnessed exponential growth literally to the ends of the known world. This church planting movement was both urban and multi-cultural. The mission-shaped, twenty-first century church is called to remember the Biblical imperative to plant churches and to embrace the cities of North America as the context for a renewed church planting movement.

The Church of God's Mission

The Sending God

At the heart of the *Missio Dei* is the nature and character of God. The Scriptures reveal that God is a loving God who has a passionate zeal for all of creation. Because God loves creation, God desires all of creation to know God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as true God because in the rightful knowledge of God is life, blessing, love, and fullness. When faced with the alienation sin created between God and creation the loving God became a sending God. God sent the second person of the Trinity, the Son, Jesus the Christ, into the world through the Incarnation of Christ. God sends the Son into the world to enflesh the love of God, manifest the Kingdom of God, and invite all to the new life of redemption in Jesus' name.²

The sending nature of God does not end with the Incarnation and the earthly ministry of Jesus. Just as God the Father sent the Son, the Son, Jesus Christ, sends the Holy Spirit into the world. After Jesus' resurrection and ascension into the heavens,

² Wright, *The Mission of God*, 4-7.

Jesus promises that He will send the Holy Spirit to be the comforter and advocate for the Church. Christ promises that the sent Spirit will be Christ's presence in and amongst his Church.³

The Sent Church

Just as the Father sent the Son and the Son sent the Spirit, the Spirit of God then sends the Church. Because God is a sending God, the Church is a sent people. Because the Church is a sent people it must also be a sending church, sending people in Jesus' name to incarnate the presence of Christ and invite those from every tribe, tongue, and nation into the fellowship of Christ's body and into participation in the *Missio Dei*.⁴ The Church must send men and women out from the established Church into the world to establish new communities of faith in Jesus' name who will participate in the *Missio Dei*. Church planting is the most effective way of making new disciples of Jesus, revitalizing existing (mother congregations), and innovating new and contextually appropriate expressions of Church.⁵ Therefore, in order to be faithful to its call to participate in the *Missio Dei*, the Church must be a planting church.

The missiology of the Church is grounded firmly in ecclesiology. The Scripture's provide the simplest form and understanding of the Church. In Matthew 18:20 Jesus says, "for wherever two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." These brief words of Jesus provide the simplest and briefest definition of the Church.

³ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 4-7.

⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵ Keller and Thompson, *Church Planter Manual*, 30. This text is attributed solely to Thompson because he was the author of this particular chapter.

However while these words are indeed simple and brief, they contain deep theological convictions that must be present within the Visible Church. First, the Church must be a collective, a gathering⁶ of at least two people who gather not alone, but are gathered around Christ's spiritual presence amongst them through His Holy Spirit and gathered with the intentional and explicit purpose of convening together in Christ's name and to worship Christ together.

The gathered Church then is called to certain practices that help center the community around the presence of Christ. The Reformer, and Father of the Reformed theological tradition, John Calvin, states that the two most fundamental practices that must be present within the gathered community for it to be a church are the "proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments."⁷ In addition to these fundamental practices the Reformed church planter, J. Allen Thompson adds the additional practices found in the Scriptures. Thompson's practices represent midrashic interpretation and application on Calvin's fundamental two spiritual practices. These practices include: "ministry of learning in the truth; ministry of loving in the fellowship; ministry of worship in the Spirit; ministry of witness through words; and a ministry of service through deeds."⁸ Finally, Thompson and Calvin both conclude that there must be local leadership called and anointed to serve as Christ-shaped leaders of the new Church.⁹

⁶ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 137. The word church is derived from the Greek word *ecclesia*, which literally means "the assembly of free citizens."

⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

⁸ Keller and Thompson, *Church Planter Manual*, 34-37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

The Church is thus a spiritual and corporate body birthed by the *Missio Dei* and called to fulfill God's missional purposes on earth. As a mission-shaped church theologian Jürgen Moltmann states, "it is not that the church 'has' a mission, but the very reverse: that the mission of Christ has its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood."¹⁰ Therefore the Church exists not for its own purposes or own gain, but for the purposes of the Kingdom of God and for the growth and expansion of the Kingdom of God. The *Missio Dei* reveals a "missionary God," and as such the people of God, the Church, are called to be a "sent people."¹¹ The Church then exists not simply to gather for the sake of itself as an insular closed system, but the Church is called to gather and participate in the practices given by Jesus Christ that will strengthen the Church for its participation in the *Missio Dei* and to embody the invitation, welcome, and inclusion of God in Jesus Christ to and for a hurting and broken world.

The Election and the Expectation of the People of God

Blessed to Be a Blessing

The Trinity prioritized relationship and made relationship paradigmatic in the calling and extending of missional relationship with the Godhead to all of creation.¹² This relationship began with Abraham and the people of Israel and was fulfilled in the coming of Christ and the birth of the Church. From the beginning, while Israel was

¹⁰ Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 10.

¹¹ Guder, *Missional Church*, 4.

¹² Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 54.

marked and set apart as God's own chosen people there was a missional call to be in relationship with the nations.¹³ God's call to Israel was to be the distinctive people of God in and amongst the nations. Through Israel's faithful witness to the truth of YHWH's reign and through Israel's good neighboring to the nations, the nations would come to know the true God and be drawn to the worship of the true God at Mount Zion.¹⁴ Even in the midst of the Abrahamic covenant that emphasized Israel's holiness, distinctiveness, and separateness from the nations, Israel was still called into multi-cultural relationships with the nations, inviting the nations into the worship of the true God. From the very beginning God's call to covenant relationship and covenant faithfulness involved "friendship on the margins"¹⁵ and friendship that crossed borders and cultures.

Israel's call to the nations continues through their history into the season known as the Babylonian captivity.¹⁶ Here the Israelites found themselves the exiled prisoners of the invading Babylonians and held captive outside of the chosen land of Canaan and in Babylon. In Jeremiah 29:4-7 to this exiled people the prophet spoke these words:

The Lord of Heavenly forces, the God of Israel, proclaims to all the exiles I have carried off from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and settle down; cultivate gardens and eat what they produce. Get married and have children; then help your sons find wives and your daughters find husbands in order that they too may have children. Increase in number there so that you don't dwindle away. Promote the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because your future depends on its welfare.

¹³ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 80-89.

¹⁴ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 479.

¹⁵ Christine Poole, *Friendship on the Margins* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010), 9-11.

¹⁶ Dan Steigerwald, *Growing Local Missionaries* (Portland, OR: Urban Loft, 2014), 18-21.

Jeremiah called the Israelites to not only seek the “*shalom*” of their oppressors, but to enter into their ways, patterns, and rhythms.¹⁷ Their ability to live cross-culturally and to enter into these multi-cultural relationships would preserve both the future and welfare of the Israelites and the nations.¹⁸

Israel’s call to be the seed of Abraham that would be a blessing to the nations was ultimately fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the literal seed of Abraham who was a descendant and the heir to David’s throne.¹⁹ In Galatians 3:16 Paul instructs that Jesus, as the seed of Abraham, fulfilled God’s plan showcased in the *Missio Dei* to include the nations in the promise of adoption into YHWH’s family through the Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus came so that the family of God, the Church, the new Israel, would be comprised of the men, women, and children from every nation, culture, and sect.²⁰

Go Therefore

Because the Trinity by its very nature is a sending God, sending Jesus into the world as the Incarnation and then both God the Father and Jesus the Son sending the Spirit to be present with the Church following Jesus’ ascension, the Church also is sent by God to participate with the Trinity in the *Missio Dei*. “The Church participates in God’s continuing creation and redemptive mission. People in the church pursue God’s mission in the world both as co-creative creatures engaging with God in the Spirit’s work

¹⁷ Steigerwald, *Growing Local Missionaries*, 18-21.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 233

²⁰ Ibid., 506.

in all creation and by bearing witness to the reign of God.”²¹ Thus, for the missional church the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the *Missio Dei* are “integrated.”²² The Church is God’s covenant people who participate in God’s Mission of redemption and restoration and who in their obedience and worship to God both embody the Reign of God on earth as outposts of God’s Kingdom and foreshadow the eschatological realization of God’s Kingdom and the completion of God’s Mission.

The Church always exists within culture and is the gathering of enculturated people planted firmly in culture to be incarnational, that is shaped by the worldview of a people, but in its missional calling to participate in the *Missio Dei*, the Church seeks to be transformational, that is the church seeks to shape its host culture and its people therein in Kingdom ways.²³ The Incarnation serves as the primacy for culturally contextualized ministry. The invisible God became visible to a particular people group in a particular cultural context in a specific geographic space. Just as the Word of God was incarnated, the Church is called to incarnate the Gospel to a particular cultural context and in ways that resonate within that context. While the Gospel, the Word of God’s redemption and restoration offered to all does not change, the message must be both spoken and embodied by the Church in and for a particular cultural context. The process of faithfully contextualizing the Gospel within unique cultures does necessitate particularity in the translation of the universal message of the Gospel of God.²⁴ Mission is the process in

²¹ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 57.

²² Ibid., 57.

²³ Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 9-25.

²⁴ Ibid.

which the Church engages in its culture, attentively, and accurately translating the Gospel message of the *Missio Dei* in the coming of Jesus Christ.

The appropriately contextualized church has the ability to change the very fabric of culture itself, redeeming the rougher and broken portions of its context and shaping it in the ways of the Kingdom of God. The contextualized church is constantly trying to be faithful to its mission found in the Scriptures and the *Missio Dei* while at the same time enfleshing that mission in the most culturally appropriate manner. This can be a tricky task and this "...vocation to live faithfully to the gospel in a fully contextual manner means that it can sometimes find itself either unfaithful or uncontextual."²⁵

The Sending Church

In Matthew 28:18-20 we read that Christ commands his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I've commanded." Similarly, in Acts 1:8 Jesus sends out his disciples to "be [his] witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." These texts are not just calls to culturally contextualized evangelism and discipleship, but these texts are calls to plant new culturally contextualized churches and missional communities.

Followers of Christ are never called to live isolated lives of discipleship, but are always called to be connected in Christian community. As Jesus calls his disciples to make new disciples, he is also (inherently) calling them to make and organize new missional communities in which the new disciples will embed, be nourished, be

²⁵ Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 9-25.

strengthened, practice the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and then ultimately be sent out to make new disciples and organize new missional communities. We see this connection between the making of new disciples and the planting of new missional communities in Acts 13:1-3 when we read about the Antioch Church:

The Church at Antioch included prophets and teachers...As they were worshipping in the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Appoint Barnabas and Saul to the work I have called them to undertake.' After they fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on these two and sent them off.

The Antioch Church, itself a missional community planted by persecuted refugees from Jerusalem, understood that in order to make new disciples of Jesus they would have to send out Paul and Barnabas instructing them to organize new missional communities as they went making new disciples.

From Attractional to Planting: New Paradigms for Post-Christendom

In order to return to a Biblical Acts-based ecclesiology, the church must begin to reconceive its very understanding of itself. This shift begins with a simple and disciplined change in language; it is time for Christians to no longer speak of "going to Church," but instead begin to speak about "being the Church."²⁶ With this simple shift in language Christians have the power to redefine church from an attractional, geographically located, programmatic specific, hierarchically defined institution, into an organic, dynamic, living and breathing movement made up of and by the very people Christ called to him. Mark 3:14 reveals that Jesus calls his followers to come and be with Him so that He might send them out in ministry and mission. Disciples of Jesus are

²⁶ Alan Hirsch. "Recalibrating the Church." Lecture. Fuller Theological Seminary: Pasadena, CA, October 31, 2011.

inherently sent ones. Church has always been a collective, a co-op, and a gathering of people who both constitute the Church's reality in and by their gathering together, but who also constitute the Church's reality by their being sent to live the Kingdom of God, or to live as the Church in their lives and their relationships. Church cannot be contained in a carefully restricted Sunday morning box or Saturday night box for an hour a week. Church happens all the time when Christians live in community according to the will of God and seek to offer the blessings of God to all they meet.

Such an understanding transforms an attractional understanding of church. We are not called to attract others to come to Church, but to extend Church to others by living lives of grace and forgiveness, of mercy and justice, and of salt and light. It is when Church is extended to others that the Kingdom expands as others see tangible proof of the hope in Christ and enter into the Kingdom. This missional and incarnational approach to witness is evident in 1 Peter 3:15 when Peter instructs the Church to, "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have." Peter encourages followers of Christ to be present in the world and to build authentic relationships with the people of culture, relationships that are so deep that the men and women of culture will feel comfortable asking Christians about their faith, thus it is a faithful and humble life of embodying the Gospel which will encourage those who are not-yet-followers of Jesus to inquire about faith in Christ.

Seeding a Movement

In order for the Church to successfully navigate this self-reconception, nothing short of a paradigm shift is need. As articulated by Alan Hirsch in his books *The*

Forgotten Ways and *On the Verge*, this paradigm shift is a fundamental shift away from the institutionality of Constantine Christendom that has created an “attractional” or “extractional”²⁷ mindset amongst Christendom Church-goers, and a movement towards a more “movemental”²⁸ understanding of Church that captures the core of Hirsch’s “Apostolic Genius” and has a new “mDNA” rewritten in the center of the paradigm defining Church, which in turn will affect the Church’s ethos and ultimately the Church’s practices. A movemental paradigm is necessary for the Church to become more faithfully contextual, missional, and incarnational.

The Christendom, institutional paradigm relies heavily on the cultural power, prestige, authority and pull the Church was given. As stated earlier, in Christendom the Church’s authority, church participation by the people, and the Christian faith were the culturally assumed normals. This led to a Church that assumed a certain cultural participation and created a “one-size fits all approach to church.”²⁹ This one-size fits all ministry strategy was predicated on the fact that the Church could assume that people would be attracted to a church building to receive religious services; the Church built its ministry on the assumption that people would come to them. Therefore the Church created a paradigm based on the self-protection and self-perpetuation of an institution that consisted of two distinct classes of people, clergy and laity. This institutional hierarchy established within the clergy a system of graduated advancement, honor, esteem, and position.³⁰

²⁷ Hirsch, “Recalibrating the Church.”

²⁸ Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, *On the Verge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 39.

²⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 32.

³⁰ Hirsch, “Recalibrating the Church.”

In this attractional paradigm people would come to the church building to “hear the Gospel and be nurtured in the faith;”³¹ these converts would not only be attracted to the church building to hear and receive the Gospel, but in addition they would be extracted out of their cultural contexts and forced to adapt to a new cultural context, that of the Christendom Church. In many ways, the Church has asked the “new converts to be cross-cultural missionaries in order to come to the Church...the Church should be the ‘sent ones,’ but the newly converted Christian is being asked to become the sent one.”³² Instead of this attractional and extractional institutional paradigm, the Church must live into a new movemental and sent paradigm for its ontology and mission.³³

The shift towards a movemental paradigm of Church is not innovation, but rather a returning to the first-century and Scriptural example of the Church. In the pages of the Gospel, the Book of Acts, and the Letters of Paul, the Church looks and acts differently from the Christendom Church. The first-century church was organized differently; there were no hierarchical institutions, only gatherings of passionate men and women who followed Jesus; there were no mission committees, only men and women who understood their role in God’s mission to proclaim the coming Kingdom of God and to invite others to come and see about Jesus; there was no professional leadership or clergy-class present in the church, only men and women who stood on equal ministry footing and received their call from the Spirit of God and who participated together in the co-creation of God’s Kingdom on earth.

³¹ Hirsch, “Recalibrating the Church.”

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

The Church must return to its original movemental paradigm. Steve Addison describes a movement as the following:

In a general sense, movements are informal groupings of people and organizations pursuing a common cause. They are people with an agenda for change. Movements don't have members, but they do have participants. The goals of a movement can be furthered by organizations, but organizations are not the totality of a movement. A movement can have leading figures, but no one person or group controls a movement. Movements are made up of people committed to a common cause...Movements are characterized by discontent, vision, and action. Discontent unfreezes people from their commitment to the way things are. Movements emerge when people feel something needs to change. If the vacuum created by discontent is filled with a vision of a different future and action to bring change, then a movement is born.³⁴

In other words, movements begin when people come together around a vision for a new future and passionately work to bring about the necessary change needed to see that vision realized.

In addition to reclaiming movement as the Church's ontological identity, the movemental paradigm also serves to clarify the Church's mission. As stated earlier, the Church, by its very nature, has always existed for others. Others are invited to come and experience the depth of community and hospitality in relationship with God and others; others are invited to experience healing from the brokenness of sin and alienation and to experience the wholeness of fullness in Christ; others are then invited to go out and to share the blessings received at the hand of God so others might come. By its very nature, the Church should always be moving outside of itself, extending to others, and Incarnating the Gospel in relationships and blessing-encounters with others. The Church and the people who comprise the Church are always sent out; there is action and movement inherent in the life and ministry of the Church.

³⁴ Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011), 28-29.

There is much that is considered necessary in the attractional paradigm that is not evidenced in the scriptural church or necessary in a new movemental paradigm. From the stale, established, and assumed institutionality of the attractional paradigm there must be a shift to a more passionate, efficient, and egalitarian paradigm. Steve Addison states that in order to have a movement, and therefore, in order to have a movemental paradigm the following must be present: “white-hot faith, commitment to a cause, contagious relationships, rapid mobilization, and adaptive methods.”³⁵

The static cultural expectation of faith in Christ and participation in the life of the Church must be replaced with a passionate love for Jesus, a desire to embody Jesus’ ways of living, a deep desire to be in authentic communities of faith in Jesus’ name, a desire to endure all things, including suffering and mockery for the sake of the Gospel, an unquenchable expectation that in the midst of the crises of life God will be present in the life of the believer, and a commitment to pursue God’s active presence through the practice of prayer and other spiritual disciplines.³⁶ Furthermore, the monolithic and slow-to-adapt institutional-paradigm-Church must be replaced with a light, agile, deployable, core that is easily taught, understood, and reproduced. Such a church would allow for adaptability in a world that has normalized cultural change and in which quick and massive change (as evidenced in communication technology) is the new normal.³⁷

At the core of the movemental paradigm there must be a new “missional DNA” or “mDNA.”³⁸ mDNA, like its biological counterpart, DNA, is “found in every living cell,

³⁵ Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 22-25.

³⁶ Ibid., 45.

³⁷ Ibid., 104-111.

³⁸ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 76.

codes genetic information for the transmission of inherited traits beyond that of the initiating organism, is self-replicating, and carries vital information for healthy reproduction.”³⁹ In other words, the greatest needed shift as the Church moves into the movemental paradigm is to exist not for institutional-preservation and protection, but for community replication and the creation of mission-minded disciples. If the Church is to make this paradigm shift, than at its core must be the elements of mDNA, when all six elements of mDNA are present then the Church has successfully captured “Apostolic Genius”⁴⁰ a returning to the markers of the New Testament Church and a capturing of the necessary features present for the Church to exist as a movement and not an institution.

Hirsch’s six elements of mDNA are; “Jesus is Lord, disciple-making, missional/incarnational impulse, apostolic environment, organic systems, and *communitas*, not community.”⁴¹ The paradigm shift begins when the Church returns to its “*radix*,” its radical center and rooted identity, people who claim that in Jesus, God has sent the awaited-Messiah and fulfilled the covenant promises. Jesus is Lord and in Jesus is life. Followers of Christ are called to walk in the ways of Jesus and the Church exists to proclaim the good news that in Jesus, God has reconciled the world.

Following the Church’s foundational proclamation regarding the Lordship of Jesus, the Church must return to the most basic form of ministry modeled by Jesus to his disciples, that of discipleship. Discipleship is the intentional and strategic process of gathering in smaller groups for mentoring and apprenticing. Just as Jesus shared his life

³⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 76.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 78-81.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

with his disciples, and through their time-spent together in a shared life was able to teach and instruct not only the ways of the Kingdom of God, but directly apply them to His disciples' lives, the Church must reclaim discipleship as the foundational ministry of the Church.

Central to the disciple-making process must be an “impulse”⁴² to create disciples who understand the missional imperative of the *Missio Dei* on the Church. The Church exists to partner with God in God's mission on the earth. Therefore this means that the Church's structure and organization always follows its mission. Therefore, the organizing principles of the Church follow the mission of being sent ones. This means followers of Jesus are called to incarnate the Gospel in their families, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Every place and every encounter is an opportunity to embody the Kingdom of God.⁴³

⁴² Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 127.

⁴³ Ibid., 128-147.

PART THREE

MINISTRY STRATEGY

CHAPTER 4

A MINISTRY PLAN TOWARDS BECOMING A SENDING CHURCH

Because God is a sending God and the Church is called to be a sent and sending Church, in order for Bonhomme to be faithful to its God-given call to represent and participate in the *Missio Dei* it must move beyond an attractional-Christendom paradigm for ministry and embrace a sending paradigm in which it is training, equipping, and sending out leaders to plant new churches and missional communities. This project seeks first to lead a process of culture change within Bonhomme so that it embraces a sending ethos and becomes a planting church. Secondly, this project seeks to launch a strategic and sustainable planting movement¹ across St. Louis to participate in God's ongoing mission in the region and seek the *shalom* of the city.²

Theological Implications

A Sending Paradigm in a Post-Modern Context

In order for Bonhomme to become a sending Church and for there to be sustainable culture change within the congregation there are four theological implications that must be appropriated for Bonhomme to experience transformation and embrace a

¹ Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 29-33.

² Steigerwald, *Growing Local Missionaries*, 37-41.

sending paradigm. First, Bonhomme must understand the contextual and cultural shift from Modernity and Christendom to Post-Modernity and Post-Christendom. Upon understanding this shift Bonhomme must then adjust its ministry paradigm from exclusively attractional to missional. A true understanding of a missional paradigm will lead to a re-narration of what it means to be church at Bonhomme that is less hierarchical, institutional, and attractional and more defined as communities of followers of Jesus on mission together.

The world-view and cultural framework that once defined the culture of Modernist North America are eroding and evaporating. The meta-narrative of Modernity is being replaced with the micro-narratives of Post-Modernity. As such, “the church is in an ‘in-between’ place where modernity’s maps are inadequate but new maps have yet to be created.”³ The Church must be about the practice of understanding and exegeting its new cultural context so that it can incarnate the Gospel for the people of the Post-Modern generation.

Bonhomme’s culture change begins as it starts to understand the theological concept of “church” less as a programmatic and attractional campus and more as a worshiping community of followers of Christ who are on mission. The Book of Acts relates that the Christian *ecclesia* gathered in small communities in houses to share a meal, celebrate the Lord’s Supper, reflect on the teaching of the apostles and to meet the needs of those in their community and city. Throughout Christendom, the term church began to morph from an expression indicating a small, missional gathering of Christians to a corporate, established, liturgized service of worship. It is this Christendom definition of church that so dominates Bonhomme’s ecclesial imagination.

³ Alan Roxburgh, *Missional Map Making* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 21.

Growing into a missional-sending church calls for a reimagining of church less as an institutionalized, clergy led church, and more as a missional community connected by common faith in Christ, connected by friendships with each other, and committed to a common mission of blessing others and their neighborhoods in the name of Jesus.⁴

Missional communities can be described as:

The body of Christ gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, who practice mutual care and accountability for one another and develop self-sustaining leadership, who are sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world by seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ by taking on innovative forms of church for our changing culture.⁵

In a missional community, one does not simply go to church, because the people are the Church. In a missional community mission is not a program of the Church, but infused into the community's very being and present in every relationship, conversation, and friendship. Thinking of the Church as missional communities allows for a more contextualized expression of communities that resonate with the various tribes of Post-Modernity and seek to connect them not to program, but to God's ongoing mission.

Sent Ones, Senders, and Supporters; Leadership Roles in a Sending Congregation

A second theological implication of Bonhomme's culture change involves a robust missional understanding of the necessary leadership roles and qualities necessary in becoming a sending congregation. In order to truly become a sending church there

⁴ Steigerwald, *Growing Local Missionaries*, 30-31

⁵ Brian Clark et al., *Starting New Worshipping Communities* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency, 2014), 6.

will be three different leadership roles necessary; supporters, senders, and sent ones.⁶

Each of these roles has unique and critical work to do in creating a sustainable culture of sending.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12 Paul expresses a theology of spiritual gifts when he writes, “Christ is just like the human body – a body is a unit and has many parts; and all the parts of the body are one body, even though there are many.” Bonhomme must look to identify and train those who will be “sent” out to plant a new church or missional community.⁷ Sent ones will embed missionally within culture seeking to establish and build relationships with the people.⁸ The sent ones will establish the relationships and direct ministry of the planted community.⁹

In addition to “sent-ones” Bonhomme will need to cultivate leaders who are “senders.”¹⁰ “Senders support the ‘sent’ group at a distance with resources of prayers, and other things required to help realize the vision.”¹¹ Senders are not necessarily gifted as cultural missionaries to embed and be a part of a new missional community, but they remain passionate about supporting the mission and vision of becoming a sending congregation and planting new communities. While sent-ones will serve on the plant team, senders will serve on the oversight team and will be largely responsible for

⁶ Clark et al., *Starting New Worshipping Communities*, 57-59.

⁷ Ibid., 52-55.

⁸ Ibid., 56-57.

⁹ Ibid., 58-59.

¹⁰ Ibid., 53-54.

¹¹ Ibid., 58.

championing and supporting the sent-missionaries.¹² Finally, Bonhomme will need to establish a culture ripe with “supporters” of becoming a sending church and future planted communities.¹³ Supporters serve in “non-direct roles,” but still play a critical role in establishing an ethos of support.¹⁴

Freedom, Accountability, and Communication; the Ongoing Relationship Between Mother and Daughter Churches

A third theological implication involves issues of control, trust, and autonomy within new church plants. As a sending church, Bonhomme must trust the power of the Spirit to equip and lead future church plants and their commissioned leaders to pursue God’s mission and vision for the individualized plants. Bonhomme must learn to relinquish control and give the plants necessary autonomy while seeking to offer them support and accountability.

The sending church must establish an ethos that balances accountability with permission; communication with freedom. New plants that have a connection with established sending churches are more likely to both succeed initially and become a sustainable and established church in the future.¹⁵ Young plants need compassionate and supportive sending congregations willing to have ongoing conversations that ask young plants how they are progressing on their goals and mission plans.¹⁶ These accountability

¹² Clark et al., *Starting New Worshipping Communities*, 58-59.

¹³ Ibid., 58.

¹⁴ Ibid., 58.

¹⁵ Vera White, Director of the 1001 New Worshipping Communities Initiative of the Presbyterian Church (USA), 2011. Phone Conversation with author. St. Louis, MO. May 10, 2014.

conversations help plants remain focused in the midst of a season of ministry in which the sheer volume of opportunity and work can serve to actually deter the plant from establishing itself.¹⁷

While sending congregations must help hold plants accountable, the sending congregation must be careful not to become overly controlling or even manipulative. Sending congregations must trust that the sent-ones are the experts and must be empowered to lead the conversations on mission strategy and mission evaluation. In some ways, the sending congregation exists to create the space and permission for the plant to have critical, self-evaluative conversations. There is no more important element to achieve the balance between freedom and accountability than honest, open, and frequent communication. As Bonhomme progresses towards becoming a sending congregation and sends out people to plant new communities, it is essential that a communication strategy and plan that delineates specific times for communication and feedback be established.

Launching a Movement

The fourth and final theological implication involves launching a movement. If Bonhomme desires to become a church that plants not just one new church, but becomes a planting congregation that consistently and routinely plants new churches Bonhomme must embrace a movemental paradigm. The congregation must begin to think about creating and sustaining a movement of Jesus Christ.¹⁸

¹⁶ White, 2014.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Movements begin when people come together around a vision for a new future and passionately work to bring about the necessary change needed to see that vision realized. The goal of this project and the desired outcome is not just that Bonhomme would plant one congregation in the future, but that Bonhomme will have experienced culture change and that it will have embraced a sending ethos that will launch a church planting movement that will plant many communities throughout the years to come. This not only necessitates a strategic long-term vision, but the establishment of people who are passionate about a vision. A movement exceeds any one person's ability to lead or facilitate, but seeks to launch a viral explosion of implemented new vision.

Goals

This project has four explicit goals. First, it seeks to create a multi-year process to catalyze culture change within the Bonhomme congregation. Second, it seeks to develop the leadership teams necessary both to change culture within the congregation and also to plant new churches. Third, it seeks to launch a movement that will seek to work towards the *shalom* of St. Louis by establishing a strategic plan and blueprint to plant new churches across the entire region. Finally, this project seeks to begin the implementation process of the planting blueprint by creating a specific mission plan for a single plant that will engage the Grove neighborhood of St. Louis.

Catalyze Culture Change at Bonhomme

Changing the culture of any organization involves a deliberate and systematic approach. In order to change the culture at Bonhomme from an attractional church to a

¹⁸ Hirsch and Ferguson, *On the Verge*, 64.

sending church that will launch a church planting movement, a strategic process will be implemented that will seek to “establish a sense of urgency, create a guiding coalition, develop a vision and strategy, communicate the change vision, empower broad-based action, generate short-term wins, consolidate gains and produce more change, and anchor the new approaches in the culture.”¹⁹

This project envisions a four-year process that will produce a sustainable sending culture embedded within the ethos of the congregation. The four-year process will involve exploring the theological and Biblical rationale for planting new communities, a year of experimenting with new ministry paradigms and seeking to catalyze a more intentional congregational conversation on embracing a sending ethos. The third year will be spent embracing, publicizing, and celebrating the missional experiments and progress being made and seeking to continue to build on the momentum already being established by the missional experiments and within the congregation at large as it moves towards a sending paradigm. The fourth and final year envisions a formal launch year in which the sent-ones are commissioned and Bonhomme celebrates the missional innovation occurring through its plant and begins to plant again.

Commission a Plant Team

If a new church is to be planted, it is necessary to recruit, train, and deploy a plant team consisting of sent-ones to embed in the midst of culture and start a new church based on the needs of the community and movement of the Spirit. This project expresses the explicit goal of establishing such a plant team. Establishing a plant team will be the culmination of a lengthier leadership recruitment and development process that also

¹⁹ John Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 1996), 21.

includes establishing a catalyzing team to lead a congregational conversation within Bonhomme that will serve to catalyze culture change.

Envision a Regional, Movemental, Planting Blue Print

This project desires to launch a movement and not to plant a single church. This requires not only internal culture change with the Bonhomme congregation, but also the careful, thoughtful, prayerful, and strategic assessment and exegesis of culture. As discussed in the first chapter of this project, upon surveying the cultural landscape of St. Louis there are four-key sociological trends that merit attention and are ripe for planting missional communities. This project will create a planting blue print that will articulate a strategy for planting churches across St. Louis that seek to engage the four primary sociological realities and movements of exurban migration, the revitalization and redevelopment of the city's "Central Corridor," the growing immigrant and refugee community, and the growing segregation of races within St. Louis and the increasing marginalization of African-Americans.

Create a Planting Mission Plan for The Grove Neighborhood

The Grove neighborhood is located within St. Louis' revitalized "Central Corridor" and represents an important neighborhood in an overall vision to seek the *shalom* of the city. Because the Grove's population represents a unique cross-section of the city's demographics it represents an important neighborhood in the planting blue print of Bonhomme as this project seeks to create an exhaustive mission plan for planting a

new missional community within this neighborhood as the inaugural plant out of Bonhomme.

Strategy

Each of the above-mentioned goals has corresponding strategy for its achievement. This section seeks to articulate the strategy for each of the goals. Through the implantation of these strategies Bonhomme will achieve its goal of becoming a planting congregation.

Conduct a Congregational Conversation and Develop Leaders

The process for leading change within the Bonhomme congregation begins first with “establishing a sense of urgency.”²⁰ This sense of urgency will be established at Bonhomme first through a thorough reading of the Scripture’s missional call for churches to be sending churches, a careful evaluation of religious and sociological data that reveals the effectiveness of church plants at making new Christians, and finally an examination of Bonhomme’s slow, but steady, decade long decline in membership attendance and participation. After creating a sense of urgency, this project seeks to cast a new vision²¹ for the sending of Bonhomme Presbyterian Church. This vision involves the planting of multiple smaller missional communities and not attempting to add larger church programs. The subsequent plan represents Bonhomme’s desire to not only plant a single missional community, but to become a planting church wherein the planting of missional

²⁰ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 35.

²¹ Ibid., 67.

communities is viewed both as normative and indicative of what it means to be a missional church. This process will occur over a four year period from 2014-2017 and will involve intentional seasons of catalyzing conversations, experimentation and praxis, and conclude with a sustainable culture and process for planting into the future. The work of catalyzing culture change will be led by the Missional Community Catalyzing Team.

The work of catalyzing congregational change and pursuing real and tangible missional experiments will be clearly articulated and communicated.²² A Catalyzing Team of leaders and key stakeholders who are amenable to the new vision will be recruited to lead the process of catalyzing cultural change within the congregation. Not only will these catalyzing leaders champion and educate the need for changing church culture, but they will seek to plant new missional initiatives based on the missional-community-paradigm that will serve to “generate short term wins” and “anchor new approaches [to ministry] within the culture [of Bonhomme].”²³ These new missional initiatives will serve as missional-laboratory-experiments testing different incarnational approaches to mission.

Strategy: Seek the Spirit in Prayer and Exegete Context

The catalyzing team will lead a process that engages different neighborhoods of St. Louis in a process of discerning where the Spirit of God is at work and exegeting the context of various communities. Through an intentional process of being present in a

²² Kotter, *Leading Change*, 85.

²³ Ibid., 117, 144.

variety of neighborhoods, interacting, befriending, and talking to the various residents of St. Louis, and seeking to discern the needs of the community, the Catalyzing Team will begin the process of identifying the communities in which to plant new churches.

These site visits will begin with prayer and a study of Scripture. Each Scripture passage will focus on Christ's call to the disciples to be on mission. The visits will include extended time spent within "third places" of the given community, like a coffee shop, bar, or park and will allow for a time of extended observation and conversation.²⁴ Catalyzing Team members will be encouraged to observe the type of people present, what they are doing, whether they are talking with others or sitting alone, and how they are dressed.²⁵ Team members will be asked to engage someone from the community in a conversation about the community and its needs, like what types of people live in the neighborhood, what challenges and benefits the neighborhood provides, whether or not the residents work in the neighborhood and what kind of faith communities are present.²⁶ Upon completion of this time of observation and conversation, Catalyzing Team members will be given the opportunity to speak with each other about their experiences.

These site visits will serve to begin to help the Catalyzing Team discern the movement and calling of the Spirit in regards to locations and paradigms for future plants. The site visits will focus on neighborhoods that fall within the parameters of the four strategic sociological factors in St. Louis. Specifically, the Catalyzing Team will seek to plant the first church in a community within St. Louis' central corridor.

²⁴ Clark et al., *Starting New Worshipping Communities*, 31-35.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Articulate a Mission Plan: The Grove

The fourth and final strategy for achieving culture change within Bonhomme involves the planting of a new missional community within the Grove neighborhood of St. Louis' central corridor. The Grove, an urban neighborhood in St. Louis' central corridor and larger urban district, Forest Park Southeast, "is a thriving...district along Manchester Ave. between Kingshighway and Vandeventer...and features a diversity of [housing] and businesses, including bars, restaurants, hair salons, tattoo parlors, an architecture firm, [coffee shop], book stores, gift shops, dress shops, and much more."²⁷ Thanks to a vision for intentional redevelopment, the Grove is one of St. Louis' fastest growing neighborhoods.

The Grove can also attribute its growth and redevelopment to its geographic location within the city of St. Louis' central corridor. St. Louis' urban central corridor is seeing economic and residential investment and development.²⁸ The central corridor's redevelopment is largely being driven by the Cortex Business Park, a venture between Washington University in St. Louis, Barnes Jewish Hospital, Saint Louis University, the Missouri Botanical Gardens, and Monsanto.

The Cortex seeks to become an innovation hub for science and medical technology and innovation in addition to cementing St. Louis as a world leader in the plant sciences.²⁹ In addition, the Cortex seeks to attract entrepreneurs and is focused on creating small business hubs and innovation centers.³⁰ The Cortex has already spawned

²⁷ The Grove St. Louis, "Bio," www.thegrovestl.com/bio/ (accessed January 20, 2015).

²⁸ Bryant, "Anchors and Transit Spur Growth of St. Louis Corridor."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

massive public works improvements including a newly reconstructed and redesigned I-64 that serves as the city of St. Louis' central artery.

The Grove is set to grow exponentially over the next five to ten years. Over the last five years the Grove has seen a considerable change in demographics. Economically disadvantaged inner-city residents are being replaced by college-educated young professional “hipsters.” Crumbling warehouses are now being turned into rehabbed lofts. A once largely African-American community is now largely bi-racial and trending whiter with each passing year. The development and gentrification of the Grove will cause conflict and potentially even crisis within the neighborhood.

A new missional community planted in the Grove must be cognizant of these changing demographics, but must also be faithful to the Kingdom of God and work to be both a place of inclusion for all people and advocacy for the least of these. A truly Kingdom-shaped church in the Grove will not just seek to attract the “hipster” Millennials, but will seek to connect the new residents to the community with long-time residents. A Missional Community to the Grove has the potential of being unique and important to the Kingdom in that it can transcend cultural and economic barriers that have divided the Church.

Kingdom Rising will be the missional community plant in the Grove that must seek to embody the Kingdom of God by taking advantage of the unique neighborhood by creating a church for every tribe, tongue, nation, and economic class. *Kingdom Rising* will seek the shalom of the Grove by becoming a plant with a movemental and missional paradigm. The new plant will seek to establish an incarnational presence in the Grove that serves as the foundation for creating authentic relationships, developing a network of

house church communities connected by a common rule of life based upon the plant's mission, vision, and values. *Kingdom Rising* will focus on the ministry of discipleship and spiritual apprenticeship, the practice of mercy and justice, digitized and dispersed teachings to teach and equip across the broad network of house churches, and the development of a leadership team indigenous to the Grove neighborhood.

Kingdom Rising will be lead by a bi-vocational, lead missionary who will seek employment in one of the neighborhood bars or restaurants thus creating more opportunities to meet people and develop relationships with the folks of the Grove. Financial considerations for *Kingdom Rising* will remain low because of the emphasis on developing indigenous, lay leadership, and the bi-vocational model for missionary staff. As stated previously in this chapter, all church plants must be connected to accountability conversation partners to ensure strategic pursuit of their vision. The following table represents growth targets for *Kingdom Rising* and will serve as the basis for all accountability conversations with Bonhomme Presbyterian Church.

| Year | Number of House Churches | Number of People Involved in a Single House Church | Number of Discipleship Clusters | Number of People Involved in a Discipleship Cluster | Total Number of People Involved in <i>Kingdom Rising</i> |
|------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | 6-12 | 2-4 | 6-12 | 12 |
| 2 | 3 | 18-36 | 6-12 | 18-36 | 24 |
| 3 | 6-9 | 36-108 | 12-24 | 36-72 | 72 |
| 4 | 12-18 | 72-216 | 24-48 | 72-144 | 144 |

These growth targets represent a desire to see the community size double each of the first three years. Based on the nature of the Grove neighborhood and ministry paradigm it is not expected or desired that *Kingdom Rising* grow beyond 150-200 total participants. When the number reaches beyond the 200 total people participating, *Kingdom Rising* will seek to enter into a season of prayer and discern a new community in the city of St. Louis in which to plant a new missional community.³¹

Kingdom Rising represents a flat and organic model of church that centers around a sending/sent paradigm for mission and ministry. It seeks to be faithful to the Biblical mandate to establish a multi-cultural community that is representative of the eschatological people of God. As an urban church it seeks to embody the necessary practices and advocacies that place a priority on issues of mercy and justice for the least of these. Lastly, it proposes realistic growth targets and appropriately sustainable financial goals. As the city of St. Louis, and in particular the Grove continues to see development and growth, *Kingdom Rising* will not only grow with the community, but will help to manifest the Kingdom of God rising in the midst of the city and help conform people to the image of Christ.

People

Catalyzing Team: Visionaries, Early Adopters, and Influencers

The Catalyzing Team will facilitate a congregational conversation regarding becoming a sending congregation. The Catalyzing Team will seek to engage congregants in informal conversation, Sunday School classes, Bible studies, book studies, hosting conferences, and other forms of education regarding the missional church and its sending

³¹ Ferguson and Ferguson, *Exponential*, 165-177.

nature. Team members will study the theology and missiology of church planting becoming advocates, educators, vision-casters, and catalysts to the Bonhomme congregation and will create a theological vision for Bonhomme's missional community plant based on Reformed doctrinal foundations, and on an ecclesial framework.

In addition, the team will begin a process of discerning God's will for the missional community plant focusing on getting Bonhomme ready to plant a missional community. The Catalyzing Team will serve in a precursory and advisory role to the planting Core Team who will make final decisions regarding the specifics of the future plant. The Catalyzing Team's final works will be to ensure the sustainability of Bonhomme's sending paradigm first through the recruitment, training, and sending of a plant team for a specific missional community and second to work to advocate for the creation of a Planting Commission of the Session of Bonhomme establishing a permanent leadership presence within the congregation that advocates and has the power to resource the vision of becoming a sending church.

Next, the Catalyzing Team will help the Bonhomme congregation understand how to plant a missional community. Team members will study the best practices and processes of planting a church. Team members will explore different planting models and the different planting processes associated with each model. Team members will work to craft vision, mission, and values for Bonhomme's missional community plant.

The Catalyzing Team will give careful prayer, thought, and reflection to whom the Holy Spirit is leading to be invited to join the Core Team for the missional community plant. The Catalyzing Team will actively be engaged in the recruitment

process to establish the Core Team. Members of the Catalyzing Team may also become part of the Core Team, but it is neither expected nor required.

Leadership: Staff, Session, Deacons, Stakeholders

For any new vision or process of culture change to take hold it must first be embraced and championed by both the official and unofficial leaders within any organization. To that end, if Bonhomme is to become a sending church this vision must be passionately embraced and zealously affirmed by the ministry staff. The Senior Pastor must become the chief visionary and must make sure the vision to become a sending church is the top priority in all communication and strategy going forward. He must work to align ministry goals and practices to help achieve this goal. In addition, he must seek to personally connect with influential members who do not support this particular vision.

The Associate Pastor for Mission and Planting will serve as the steward and catalyst for the vision and process of culture change. His work will be largely centered on leading the Catalyzing Team and helping to facilitate the congregational conversation. In addition, the Associate Pastor for Mission and Planting must become a missionary-in-residence and begin to spend substantial amounts of time in the community seeking to connect with the people in the neighborhoods Bonhomme wishes to plant. Finally, the Associate Pastor must seek to begin to identify and train future members of the plant Core Team.

Other ministry staff members, like the Director of Children's Ministry and Director of Youth Ministry must play the important role of supporting and advocating the

vision. This is especially true because it will begin to redirect resources away from their attractional-paradigm-programs and towards funding new missional initiatives. These directors must begin to apply missional practices to their own ministry areas and discern how children's ministry and student ministry can also undergo a culture change and become less attractional and more missional.

The Session is the governing body of the Presbyterian Church made up of lay elders. The Session both sets the vision and resources the vision of the church. As such, the Session must be the primary agent of articulating new vision and seeking to find new ways to resource the vision of becoming a sending congregation. The deacons represent another governing body, tasked not with casting vision and setting ministry priorities, but implementing the vision and will of the Session. Deacons must have clarity on the vision and a clear understanding of what it means to be a sending congregation and the ways their roles will become facilitators of a more missional paradigm and no longer people who simply run and staff attractional ministry programs. Deacons must receive training on building relationships with people outside of church and learn how to embed incarnationally in culture. As such, deacons will be key leaders who embody and live out the new paradigm of mission at Bonhomme.

In any congregation there are women and men who do not hold any specific or official office or leadership position, but still carry great power and influence. These stakeholders must be identified and careful attention must be given to winning them over to the vision. Through theological and Biblical study, prayer and informal conversation the vision must be cast individually and specifically to these influencers so they share the passion for becoming a sending congregation. In addition, they must be sent out

themselves to champion this new culture at Bonhomme to their friends and in their informal relational circles.

Congregational Embrace

In order for cultural change to take place within Bonhomme it must be adopted and accepted by the congregation at large. Alan Hirsch estimates that culture change within a congregation is inevitable once 15 percent of the population has embraced the change.³² To that end, the above-mentioned leaders – staff, Session, deacons, and stakeholders – must work to identify those within the congregation who are receptive to the idea of becoming a sending congregation. Once these “early adopters”³³ have been identified they must be trained and encouraged to have conversations within their circle of relationships and passionately encourage others to get on board. Through informal conversations with leadership and early adopters, a systematic education plan, and a high profile communication campaign that champions the missional and spiritual import of becoming a sending church, over the course of four years the congregation will see the necessary change in culture to become a sustainably sending congregation.

People of The Grove

Since The Grove has been identified as the location for the first plant out of Bonhomme and an important missional experiment that will help to change culture at the mother church, careful attention must be paid to the residents of the Grove. The future plant, *Kingdom Rising*, must prioritize the voice and needs of the people of the Grove.

³² Hirsch, “Recalibrating the Church.”

³³ Ibid.

The people of the Grove must feel as if *Kingdom Rising* is indigenous and authentic to the community and not a paternalistic import from an outside organization. For this reason all leadership within *Kingdom Rising* must be indigenous and careful attention must be paid to ensure that *Kingdom Rising* is of and for the people of the Grove.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING CULTURE CHANGE

Chapter 5 will describe a four-year process of changing the culture at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church so that church planting will be viewed as a normative part of its mission and ministry. The culture change will be catalyzed through a team led congregational conversation and measured through the establishment of deliverables that will be accomplished only if the leadership and congregation have embraced the vision of becoming a planting church. These deliverables include a new commission of the Session to lead the ministry of planting churches and a church-wide mission capital campaign to raise necessary funds to resource the vision. The goal of the campaign would be to raise upwards of \$1,000,000 to endow a sustainable and consistent mission of planting new churches every three to five years.

A Process and Timeline for Changing Culture

Discerning the Spirit and Seeking the *Missio Dei*, 2014

Beginning in the Fall of 2014 Bonhomme will formally invoke on its process of culture change. This will begin with a year dedicated to discerning the Spirit of God's calling in Bonhomme's life as a sending congregation. This work will begin by

prioritizing prayer and seeking the will of God. A prayer team will be established to meet together weekly to pray for God's wisdom and direction as Bonhomme begins to ask and answer questions related to becoming a sending congregation.

In addition to the work of prayer and the practicing of the spiritual disciplines to discern God's leading, the year of discernment will also be a year focused on learning and assessment. During this year the Associate Pastor for Mission and Planting will prioritize participation in a variety of church planters' assessments to determine his gifting and calling in relation to the ministry of starting new churches. In addition, the Associate Pastor for Mission and Planting will seek to commit himself to rigorous study and education in the field of church planting and starting new innovative ministries. The fruit of these assessments and educational opportunities will be shared with the congregation through the strong Spiritual Formation ministry at Bonhomme. Two new Spiritual Formation classes will be offered to continue to educate the congregation on the call to become a sending congregation. These classes will be "Becoming a Sending Church," and "Why Plant Churches." As the year of discerning comes to a close the Catalyzing Team members will be recruited so by the end of the first year not only will there have been a thorough season of discernment, assessment, education, and teaching, but the guiding coalition¹ within the congregation, the Catalyzing Team, will be ready to meet on a weekly basis.

A Year of Catalyzing, 2015

During the year of catalyzing specific attention will be given to training and equipping the members of the Catalyzing Team to become advocates of the call to be a

¹ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 51.

sending congregation. Team members will become experts in the work and ministry of planting new churches and will be equipped to have transformational conversations with other members of Bonhomme to help transform culture and advocate for the new sending ethos.

The Catalyzing Team will meet on a weekly basis to study the Scriptures and pray for each other, the church, and for the call to become a sending congregation. In addition, the Catalyzing Team will work systematically through training resources important for equipping churches in becoming a sending congregation. These resources include, Alan Hirsch's, *The Forgotten Ways*, Tim Keller's article, "Why Plant Churches," Doug Paggit's, *Church in the Inventive Age*, and the *Starting New Worshipping Communities* resource from the PCUSA mission agency. These texts will serve as the basis of a self-created training curriculum and program that will also include making site visits to various St. Louis neighborhoods. In addition, the Catalyzing Team will become a missional community experimental lab seeking to model the ways of a missional community in fellowship and mission.

This season of catalyzing will involve hosting various planting conferences and conversations for the attendance of the Bonhomme community as a whole and will also prioritize communicating to the congregation the call to become a sending congregation. An eight-week sermon series on church planting in the Books of Acts will be preached to the congregation and monthly videos will be created to share with the congregation that not only relate the theological and scriptural call to become a sending church, but will perform cultural exegesis and help the congregation understand the needs of St. Louis and the opportunities present to plant new churches.

In addition, Bonhomme will seek to establish a partnership with an organization dedicated to training local congregations to become more missional. These organizations include Missio or Forge USA. Bonhomme has a long history of supporting missionaries in the field and hearing from these missionaries on a monthly basis during the worship services. In order to continue to create a public context for the catalyzing conversation of becoming a sending congregation, during the year of catalyzing Bonhomme will look to become mission supporters and partner with a church planter. Bonhomme's support of the church planter will be similar to its support of other missionaries and will involve both financial, logistical, and prayer support. A special emphasis will be made to include regular communication about the work of the planter and the role of church planting in worship services and other church communications.

By the end of the year the Catalyzing Team will have made a decision regarding the specific neighborhood in which the Spirit of God is calling Bonhomme to plant a new community. In addition to discerning the neighborhood, the Catalyzing Team will have recruited an initial Core Team to serve as the primary "sent ones"² to begin an incarnational missional community. The Catalyzing Team will continue the work of leading conversations at Bonhomme and will also take on the new role of being the "sending and supporting"³ team for the new plant.

Year of Experimenting and Envisioning, 2016

During the year of experimenting and envisioning a Core Team will be recruited to become an incarnational plant team. They will embed in the Grove neighborhood and

² Clark et al., *Starting New Worshipping Communities*, 56-59.

³ Ibid.

seek to live into the vision for *Kingdom Rising* as previously articulated. They will focus on being present within the community and establishing relationships with the residents of the Grove and will seek to establish a *koinos* model of networked house churches that will begin to meet throughout the Grove.⁴

The Core Team will continue to be strongly tied to Bonhomme and will serve to leaven the congregational conversation to become a sending congregation. The Core Team to the Grove will serve as an experimental mission of Bonhomme and will seek to constantly engage the Bonhomme congregation in conversation regarding their new missional paradigm and their learning regarding ministry in a Post-Modern and Post-Christian context. The findings from the Core Team will seek to be implemented in the ministries, neighborhoods, and other communities Bonhomme currently serves.

The Core Team will continue to be supported logistically, financially, and most importantly in prayer by the Bonhomme Congregation. The Catalyzing Team will seek to have weekly, monthly, and quarterly conversations for encouragement, equipping, and evaluation with the plant core team of *Kingdom Rising*. Members of the core team will return to Bonhomme frequently to preach and teach on Sunday mornings to continue to help change the ethos within the sending congregation.

Year of Commissioning and Sending, 2017

By 2017 the Core Team will have had more time to incarnate within the Grove and will have more substantial evidence of its budding missional community. While 2016 represented “soft launch” of *Kingdom Rising*, 2017 will see a more formal and

⁴ Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 170-181.

ceremonial sending. This higher profile sending will be used to continue to cement the catalyzing conversations and culture change within the mother congregation.

In addition to commissioning the Core Team for *Kingdom Rising*, the Bonhomme session will act to establish a planting commission of the Session to be dedicated to consistent support and resourcing of the mission of becoming a sending congregation. As a commission it will act with the authority of Session and will serve to streamline the process of providing the necessary support and vision for planting congregations throughout St. Louis. Finally, Bonhomme will seek to financially support this new reality, no longer a vision, of becoming a sending congregation, with a congregational wide planting mission capital campaign that will seek to raise one million dollars in financial pledges to fuel the call to become a sending congregation and fund the planting of new churches. The planting commission of the Session will also have primary stewardship responsibilities of the planting blue print seeking to engage the five emerging sociological realities in St. Louis.

Leadership Development and Resources Needed

There is no more important factor to enacting culture change at Bonhomme than recruiting and developing leaders. These leaders must be passionate supporters of the vision who embrace the call to become a sending congregation with zeal, but also they must be savvy, wise, and skilled in the art of enacting change. Leadership training requires not just education on cultural shifts and ministry paradigms, but also training on leading change and shrewd change management strategies.

As stated in the previous section, there are key resources that will be used to educate the Catalyzing Team about culture change and shifting ministry paradigms. These resources include Alan Hirsch's, *The Forgotten Ways*, and *The Forgotten Ways Handbook*, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay's, *The Tangible Kingdom*, *The Tangible Kingdom Primer*, and *AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church*, and resources specifically designed to teach planting best practices, The PCUSA's *Starting New Worshiping Communities*, Ed Stetzer's, *Planting Missional Churches*, and Tim Keller's *Church Planter's Handbook*. In addition to resources and conversation around culture and paradigm change, leadership development also seeks to engage resources designed to instruct best practices for leading change. Resources particularly helpful in equipping and training for leading change include John Kotter's, *Leading Change*, and *Accelerate*, and Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky's, *Leadership on the Line*, and *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*. These resources not only delineate the change process, but provide practical advice to enact systemic and sustainable change within an organization.

The plant core team for *Kingdom Rising* in the Grove neighborhood will also need to be recruited and developed. While it is true that the members of this team will have a natural sociological and missional affinity for incarnational ministry in the Post-Modern, Post-Christian, urban context, the team will still need to be equipped and shaped. For those team members who are relatively new to faith in Christ they will need to be partnered with a discipling mentor who will not only consistently read the Scriptures with them, but someone who will also walk them through a systematic summary of Christian theology. Greg Ogden's, *Discipleship Essentials*, provides a helpful resource for discipleship training. Those members of the plant team who have a more traditional

church experience and background will need more thorough training with the above-mentioned missional church resources to help them re-narrate and reposition their understanding of church as an incarnational missional community.

The planting commission of the Session also represents an important group of leaders who need to be trained and equipped. The planting commission represents a sustainable leadership team to steward and advocate the sending ethos and planting mission of the church. The commission will be made up of nine people, three classes of three people. Each class will serve one three-year term. Of the nine people on the commission, three will be active session members and the rest will be members at large with an interest and passion in the sending paradigm. The commission will initially look to be filled with as many members from the Catalyzing Team as possible. Because some members of the commission will not have served on the Catalyzing Team, a thorough study of the missional resources will be required for all members of the commission.

A chief task of the planting commission will be the recruitment of future planting core teams and the recruitment of a “lead missionary” to lead the work of planting future communities.⁵ The lead missionary need not be in professional ministry or ordained, in fact for more incarnational expressions of church it would be preferable that the lead missionary be bi-vocational and receive financial support through a career outside ordained professional ministry. Nevertheless, the task of identifying someone called and gifted to lead a new plant will be a high priority of the commission. For this reason, the commission will need to receive formal training in regards to discerning missional leadership as they seek to identify one called to lead plants. This training will come through participation in the PCUSA’s “Discerning Missional Leadership,” which not

⁵ Clark et al, *Starting New Worshipping Communities*, 31-35.

only seeks to identify future planters, but to equip leadership teams to sustainably support the mission of planting.⁶ In addition, resources such as *Starting New Worshiping Communities*, and *The Church Planter's Handbook* provide important training information for the commission. On a related note, any future planter will need to be similarly trained and will need to have not only been educated on missional church culture and church planting best practices, but will also have undergone a thorough and formal assessment through a church planter assessing organization.

Finally, training and education must not only occur at the leadership level, but at the congregational level. As mentioned previously, there will be five specific aspects of seeking to change the culture within the congregation. First, there will be ongoing educational opportunities and Spiritual Formation classes on the missional church, culture change, and church planting. Second, there will be a consistent communication plan that will see the call to become a sending congregation prioritized in weekly e-blasts to the congregation, monthly newsletters, weekly blog postings and other musings from pastors and ministry staff, and informal and creative video pieces to be distributed online and through Bonhomme's social media presence. Third, through the support and partnership with a church planter, the Bonhomme congregation will consistently be updated and invited to support the work of a church planter and an emerging church plant. Fourth, Bonhomme will seek to use its large and well-maintained facility to host national and local church planting and missional church conferences. These conferences will be open to the congregation and attendance at these conferences will be monitored as an assessment tool measuring culture change. Finally, the pulpit and sermon series will

⁶ One Thousand and One New Worshipping Communities, "Assessment," <http://www.one-thousandone.org/#!assessment/clw8s>, (accessed October 24, 2015).

be used to establish the theological and Biblical rationale to become a sending congregation and to plant new churches. Specifically, 2015 will see an eight-week sermon series entitled, *Exponential*, focusing on the church's exponential growth through the multiplying of disciples and the planting of new churches in the first-century recorded in the Book of Acts.

In addition to resources needed to train leaders and lead congregational conversations, there are more mundane resources necessary to lead the process of culture change within the Bonhomme congregation. First, there must be a commitment to allow the facilities to be used to further the vision of becoming a sending congregation. As stated previously, one aspect is allowing the building to be used by national and regional organizations hosting planting conferences. This will have the benefit of raising congregational awareness of the ongoing mission of planting and will provide convenient opportunities for Bonhomme members to participate in the conversation.

Space must also be provided for the various teams and commissions formed and to be formed that will shepherd and steward the sending vision. First, the Catalyzing Team will need to reserve the church conference room for its Sunday morning weekly meeting times from 9:30-11:00am during the Spiritual Formation hour. Upon the creation of the planting commission of the Session, the commission will also need to meet on a monthly basis.

Finally, there must be a commitment to financially resource the vision of becoming a sending church. Initially, that means being willing to allocate \$5,000 for leadership training and development. This commitment will grow in the future. First, the church must be willing to tithe hours from the Associate Pastor for Mission and Planting

as he will spend less time on institutional maintenance and within the established attractional ministry paradigm and more time in the community. In addition, Bonhomme should consider tithing ministry-staff weekly hours to the vision of planting as well. The Directors of Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Contemporary Worship should seek to be supportive and involved in the works of training and establishing missional communities. The primary funding for the vision will come through a church wide funding campaign seeking to raise one million dollars to endow and support the ongoing work of planting new churches.

Personnel

There are four important personnel roles necessary to enact culture change within the congregation. Perhaps the most important is the Senior Pastor. While the Senior Pastor will have little to do directly with the implementation and outworking of the vision, the Senior Pastor must be the chief visionary constantly advocating and reminding the congregation of the call God has placed before them. In addition, the Senior Pastor must serve to support and defend the Associate Pastor who will be leading the implementation process. Much like an offensive line that exists to protect and support the quarterback, the Senior Pastor must protect and support the Associate Pastor in the midst of the inevitable conflict that comes in culture change.⁷ The Associate Pastor must not have to look over his shoulder in the midst of the questions and accusations that will come throughout leading the process of change.

With the Senior Pastor's support and leadership, the Associate Pastor for Mission and Planting will serve as the catalyzer of the congregational conversation and the

⁷ White, 2014.

implementer of the vision to become a sending congregation. It will be the Associate Pastor who will work to recruit and train and subsequently work with the various leadership teams necessary to achieve the vision and the Associate Pastor will have direct staffing responsibilities for the planting commission of the Session. In addition, the Associate Pastor must serve as a missionary-in-residence and become a practitioner of incarnational, missional ministry to the Post-Modern and Post-Christian context. The Associate Pastor must have established relationships in the communities of St. Louis that are locations for perspective plants and must invite the Catalyzing Team and the future core team to come along with him in the mission of establishing an incarnational presence.

In addition to the Associate Pastor, the chief incarnational-resident will be the church planter supported as a missionary by the congregation. Supporting a church planter is one step shy of actually planting a congregation and involves even more freedom and autonomy given to the planter and even less accountability and responsibility provided by the sending congregation, but still allows for a symbiotic relationship to exist between planter and church. The supported planter must seek to communicate frequently and clearly teaching Bonhomme and in particular the Associate Pastor and the Catalyzing Team the various steps involved in establishing a new plant. The supported planter will serve as a coach and teacher sharing with the Bonhomme community his or her direct experience and all the challenges and struggles that planting presents.

Finally, the call to plant in the Grove neighborhood requires a lead missionary to lead the Core Team and the process of establishing an incarnational and missional

presence in the neighborhood. The lead missionary will be recruited under the auspices of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy and the New Worshipping Communities Commission will serve as the search and nominating committee leading a local and national search to identify the right planter. Due to the nature of the planting work, the lead planter must be a self-starter, innovative, willing to pioneer new forms of missional community, and be willing to find a means of economically supporting him/herself. In order to fully incarnate within the Grove neighborhood, it is missionally appropriate and strategically beneficial for the lead missionary to be bi-vocational and look for a job at one of the Grove's restaurants, bars, clubs, or coffee shops. Not only will this allow for the planter to provide necessary financial support, but it will also serve as a means of developing relationships with people in the community in an organic and natural way. The lead missionary will work to identify potential leaders early and begin discipling them by having intentional conversations around the Scriptures. In particular, the lead missionary will focus discipleship conversations around the Gospels and focus on leading men and women through a systematic discipleship paradigm that would seek to encourage the people of the Grove to meet Jesus, walk with Jesus, and live for Jesus.⁸ As the discipleship conversation proceeds and progresses to an understanding of living for Jesus, the lead missionary will then begin to do specific leadership development. Potential leaders will be trained and taught the mission, vision, core values, and practices of *Kingdom Rising*.⁹ In addition, potential leaders will be trained in the leadership best

⁸ Janet O. Hagberg and Robert A. Guelich, *The Critical Journey* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2005), 17. The above articulated spiritual development plan is taken from Hagberg and Guelich's work in *The Critical Journey* and their mapping of the various stages of the spiritual journey.

⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 47.

practices, being taught how to invite others into community, how to lead discipleship clusters, House Churches, and work for mercy and justice within the community.¹⁰

Assessment

There will be three key assessments used to analyze whether or not culture change within Bonhomme is occurring. These assessments involve three different ways the Bonhomme congregation is being asked to give of its resources. A very practical way to measure both interest and commitment from the congregation is attendance at the various church planting conferences to be hosted by and at Bonhomme. Asking members to attend various conferences will ask church members to give of their time to support and learn more about the vision. A specific goal would be to see incremental attendance increases with each subsequent church planting conference. It is the stated goal to host at least one planting conference a year during the four-year process. At the inaugural conference hosted at Bonhomme in May of 2014, entitled “Growing New Missional Communities” and hosted in partnership with the “One Thousand and One Movement” of the PCUSA, eighty-seven Bonhomme members attended.

A second assessment tool will be the creation of the planting commission of the Session. In establishing a commission, the Session will not only be supporting the vision of becoming a sending congregation by resourcing it with leadership and personnel resources, but it will also be taking the bold step of seeding control and creating more freedom and autonomy for the planting vision. In establishing a commission, the Session would be relinquishing direct operational control and the temptation to micro-manage.

¹⁰ Ferguson and Ferguson, *Exponential*, 58-70.

Instead, it would seek to resource the vision with passionate and well-equipped leadership.

The final assessment tool will be the campaign to raise one million dollars to support the planting vision. This represents a small fraction of the twelve million dollars the congregation raised over a six year capital campaign to expand and renovate the church campus and facilities. The million dollars would mark an important endowment for future planting and would represent an important symbolic change within the congregation, instead of funding a facilities-based attractional paradigm, the congregation will now be turning its attention to focus on a missional-based sending paradigm.

If all these assessments are met it is believed that a sending ethos will have been established within Bonhomme Presbyterian Church. The fruit of this sending ethos will be a commitment to plant a new church every three to five years and seek to launch a planting movement across the St. Louis region. Ultimately, this project's assessment will come in fifteen to twenty years and whether or not a sustainable culture was created that has birthed between three to four new missional communities that have now incarnated within the various neighborhoods of St. Louis and are seeking the *shalom* of the city.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Church in its local and specific contexts as congregations in the midst of culture and in its universal scope that transcends time and space is indeed the church of God's mission. God is indeed doing a new thing in the midst of all of creation, "setting all things to right," and it is through the Church, each local and contextually specific congregation, that God seeks to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. There is indeed a great need for the Church to understand its missional identity and be renewed by the power of the Spirit to live into its destiny and calling to make disciples of all nations and be the community into which new followers of Jesus Christ are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In the midst of the cultural change currently occurring in North America the most effective way for the Church to continue to participate in the *Mission Dei* on earth is through the dual processes of embracing missional culture change within the congregation and implementing a vision and process for starting new communities of faith. As many scholars, missiologists, and church planters have stated in this paper, planting new churches is the most effective way at making new disciples of Christ. This project has also established the truth that the most effective and strategic way to plant new churches that will be sustainable into the future is for church plants to be connected and supported by a sending congregation. To that end, for the Gospel to continue to be proclaimed and the Kingdom of God to continue to be embodied in North America there must be a vigorous and thorough process of culture change helping established congregations become incubators of future church plants. Leading missional culture change ensures the presence of healthy, missional, sending churches that can resource,

support, and sustain the ministry of planting new churches in the midst of the Post-Christian, Post-Modern, twenty-first century, North American context.

It is seemingly easier to plant a new church than to orchestrate significant culture change in an established congregation. There seems to always be the temptation when an established congregation or denomination is stuck to simply step away from the stale institution and plant something new, fresh, and different. But, if church plants are most effective when connected to a sending and supporting congregation, the need to refrain from abandoning the work of leading culture change within the established congregation is crucial. The church of the twenty-first century needs to see both a freshening and revival of established, attractional congregations and witness a commitment to planting new culturally appropriate expressions of church.

To that end, this project had three aims. First, the project sought to study and examine the process of leading change within an existing congregation. Any institution or organization has a deeply embedded culture that has been established and has flourished by making possible and efficient the work of said organization. Established cultures within organizations are helpful for achieving expected and similar results, in fact, organizational culture formed as a response to and a result of the most efficient and effective practices needed to achieve certain expected and desired outcomes. However, when the results of an organization need to begin to change, adapt, and vary simply relying on the same institutional culture to produce different results is not possible. When different results are needed a different culture must be created.

Churches like all organizations are no different. Each local congregation has its own story, way of acting, and practices that contribute to its culture. This church culture

helps the congregation make sense of its identity, place in the world, and mission and ministry. At some point all churches will need to experience some degree of change. First and foremost, this project sought to understand the process necessary to not only introduce change within a local congregation, but the process necessary to establish long-lasting, sustainable change within a congregation. This project delineated different strategies and actions to help introduce and establish change. Perhaps more than any other factor the most important and significant element in leading change within a local congregation is to allow the necessary time. Just as the established culture within a congregation is so powerfully shaping because it took years to formulate, significant and transformative culture change will have an exponentially significant impact over the course of time. In many ways, leading organizational change will appear to be non-existent or even invisible. But over time, through a consistent approach and a wise strategy the culture will change imperceptibly so at a point in the future one will look around and realize culture has changed without even realizing it was changing.

In many ways, the experience of leading culture change within the congregation is like that of swimming at the beach in a gentle or imperceptible tide. When one arrives at the beach they put down their towel and bag on the sand and then head into the water to swim, play, and splash. After some time in the water it is not uncommon to look up and realize that one's bag and towel is about ten yards further down the beach. The tide has imperceptibly moved the swimmer further down the shore. This is the case in leading organizational change and culture change within the church.

The second aim of this project was not just to study the process of leading change within an established congregation, but to lead a specific type of culture change from an

attractional, programs-based ministry paradigm to a missional, sending ministry paradigm. Part of the deep-seated institutional culture within an established congregation is the thought that in order to grow the congregation and ministry the congregation must attract more people to come to it, and by it, the congregation generally means its Sunday morning worship services. The Church then is the provider of religious goods and the performer of religious programs.

A needed missional shift is to understand that the church exists as the body of Christ to extend the love, grace, and mercy of Christ into the crevices of culture. The Church must learn how to call and equip the men and women who have sat in the pews of their congregations for twenty, thirty, and even forty years to be cultural missionaries. Many men and women who have spent their lives in the church are finding this concept so different from their previous experience of church, but while they are finding it different they also recognize in it the freshening of the Spirit and an invitation to, for the first time, live out their faith in Christ. Leading missional culture change begins and ends with equipping disciples of Jesus to share their faith and love and bless others in the name of Jesus.

The third and final aim of this project was to witness congregational embrace of its call to plant churches and worshipping communities as the fruit of the process of establishing a missional culture within a local congregation. Congregations must begin to understand that their goal is not necessarily to grow bigger and bigger and to offer more and more programs, but instead to evaluate and study the process of healthfully starting new worshipping communities and planting new churches. Churches should seek to be right-sized establishing a vital and dynamic ministry that is financially sustainable,

appropriate, and faithful and then seek to plant to ensure both the established congregation, the future church plant, and the Kingdom of God grow through the process of planting new churches.

Perhaps one of the most unique findings of this project related to sociological study and the process of culture change. While it is evident that two major meta-culture changes are occurring in the twenty-first century North American context, the shift from Modernity to Post-Modernity and from Christendom to Post-Christendom, this project inadvertently discovered that culture change occurs at different rates in different places. Certain parts of North America, most notably the major metropolitan cities and coasts have largely transitioned into Post-Christian, Post-Modernity while other parts of the country, rural America, the South, and the Mid-West see the process of change coming more slowly. Even within some of the most diverse, vibrant, and Post-Modern communities there remain elements and large pockets of people groups who have not yet fully transitioned. For example, many North American communities are seeing an increase in immigrants and refugees from the Global South. In the Global South Christendom remains powerfully entrenched. Ministry and mission to immigrant, refugee, and minority communities may need to retain a Christendom modality of ministry. Similarly, congregations that find themselves ministering to the adult populations of Baby Boomers and older will do well to recognize they are a thoroughly modern people and should adjust ministry accordingly.

All of this is to say that with the onset of Post-Modernity the micro-narrative is indeed present. In order to faithfully minister to and plant churches in the midst of all the tribes of Post-Modernity a thorough and important exegesis of culture is necessary to

ensure the Gospel is appropriately contextualized. Ironically, proper contextualization might mean planting a church that ministers to the men and women of the Christendom or Modern tribes in the midst of Post-Christendom and Post-Modernity.

Specifically, this project sought to study these various processes of culture change and implement culture change at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church in Chesterfield, MO. Bonhomme has recently just kicked off its yearlong celebration of its bicentennial. The congregation is celebrating that for the past two hundred years there has been a Gospel presence in Chesterfield, MO through Bonhomme Presbyterian Church. This is indeed an incredible achievement and worthy of celebration. The congregation continues to pursue its vision of becoming a missional planting church and remains on track to meet many of the missional metrics established in this project, but achievable only in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Addison, Steve. *Movements that Change the World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2011.
- Allen, Roland. *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1962.
- Anderson, Ray. *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.
- Bakke, Ray. *Theology as Big as the City*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997.
- Bauckham, Richard. *The Bible and Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Belcher, Jim. *Deep Church: A Third Way Beyond Emerging and Traditional*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2009.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1954.
- Braaten, Carl E. and Robert W. Jenson, eds. *Marks of the Body of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.
- Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960, IV.1.9.
- Cha, Peter S., Steve Kang, and Helen Lee, eds. *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.
- Claiborne, Shane, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, and Enuma Okoro. *Common Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Clark, Brian, Jan Edmiston, Shannon Kiser, Philip Lotspeich, Lisa Mears, Vera White, and Craig Williams. *Starting New Worshipping Communities*. Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Mission Agency, 2014.
- Cole, Neil. *Cultivating a Life for God*. Carol Stream, IL: Church Smart Resources, 1999.
- _____. *The Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2005.
- Cox, Harvey. *The Future of Faith*. San Francisco: Harper One, 2009.
- Dean, Kendra Creasy. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- DeVries, Mark. *Sustainable Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010.
- DeYmaz, Mark. *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010.
- East-West Gateway Council of Governments. *Where We Stand: The Strategic Assessment of the St. Louis Region*. Sixth Edition. St. Louis, MO, 2011.
- Elmer, Duane. *Cross-Cultural Connections*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002.
- Everts, Don. *Go and Do: Becoming a Missional Christian*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012.
- Ferguson, Dave and Jon Ferguson. *Exponential*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Fitch, David. *The End of Evangelicalism: Discerning a New Faithfulness for Mission*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.
- _____. *Prodigal Christianity*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013.
- Foster, Richard. *A Celebration of Discipline*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1988.
- Frazze, Randy. *The Connecting Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- Frost, Michael. *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Company, 2006.
- Guder, Darrell. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.
- _____, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.
- Hagberg, Janet O. and Robert Guelich. *The Critical Journey*. Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 2005.
- Halter, Hugh and Matt Smay. *AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- _____. *The Tangible Kingdom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- Hawking, Greg and Cally Parkinson. *Reveal*. Chicago: Willow Creek, 2007.

- Heifetz, Ronald A. and Marty Linsky. *Leadership On the Line*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2002.
- _____. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2009.
- Henderson, D. Michael. *A Model for Making Disciples*. Nappanee, IN: Francis Asbury Press, 1997.
- Hesselgrave, David. *Planting Churches Cross Culturally*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.
- Heuertz, Christopher L. and Christine D. Pohl. *Friendship on the Margins*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010.
- Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006.
- _____. "Recalibrating the Church." Lecture. Fuller Theological Seminary: Pasadena, CA, October 31, 2011.
- Hirsch, Alan and Dave Ferguson. *On the Verge: A Journey in the Apostolic Future of the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- Jones, Nikole Hannah. "The Problem We All Live With." *This American Life*. Aired on July 31 on NPR.
- Jones, Tony. *The New Christians: Dispatches from the Emergent Frontier*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- Katongole, Emmanuel. *The Sacrifice of Africa*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.
- Keller, Tim. *Centered Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- _____. "Why Plant Churches." New York: Redeemer City to City, 2009.
- Keller, Tim and J. Allen Thompson. *Church Planter Manual*. New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church Publishing, 2002.
- Kinnamon, David. *UnChristian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 2007.
- Kotter, John P. *Accelerate*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014.
- _____. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1996.

- Linthicum, Robert. *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991.
- Lyons, Gabe. *The Next Christians: How a New Generation is Restoring the Faith*. New York: Doubleday, 2010.
- McNeal, Reggie. *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Church in the Power of the Spirit*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Moore, Doug. "Census Shows City is 'Hollowing Out.'" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. February 25, 2011.
- Myers, Joseph R. *The Search to Belong*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986.
- _____. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.
- Ogden, Greg. *Transforming Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003.
- Pagitt, Doug. *Church in the Inventive Age*. Minneapolis, MN: Spark House, 2010.
- Pathak, Jay and Dave Runyon. *The Art of Neighboring*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012.
- Perkins, John M. *With Justice for All*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007.
- Peterson, Eugene. *The Message*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2003.
- _____. *The Pastor*. New York: Harper One, 2011.
- _____. *Working the Angles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Poole, Christine. *Friendship on the Margins*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2010.
- Primm, James Neal. *Lion of the Valley*. Saint Louis, MO: Missouri Historical Press, 1998.
- Quinn, Robert E. *Deep Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- Ramos Cooper, Joshua. *The Age of the Unthinkable*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2009.

- Rohr, Richard and Andreas Egbert. *The Enneagram*. New York: Crossroad, 2011.
- Roxburgh, Alan J. *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- Roxburgh, Alan J and Fred Romanuk. *The Missional Leader*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Scazzero, Peter. *Emotional Healthy Spirituality*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006.
- Sider, Ronald J., John M. Perkins, Wayne L. Gordon, and F. Albert Tizon. *Linking Arms, Linking Lives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.
- Steigerwald, Dan. *Growing Local Missionaries*. Portland, OR: Urban Loft, 2014.
- Steigerwald, Dan and Kelly Crul, eds. *Grow Where You Are Planted*. Portland, OR: Christian Associates Press, 2013.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting Missional Churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006.
- Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007.
- The Northumbria Community Trust Ltd., ed. *Celtic Daily Prayer*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- The Pruitt Igoe Myth*. Directed by Chad Freidrichs. New York: First Run Features, DVD, 2011.
- Tyra, Gary. *Defeating Pharisaism*. Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic, 2009.
- Van Gelder, Craig. *The Essence of the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.
- _____. *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007.
- Van Gelder, Craig and Dwight J. Zscheile. *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011.
- Volf, Miroslav. *After Our Likeness*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

- Webber, Robert E. *Ancient Future Worship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.
- White, Randy. *Encounter God in the City*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.
- _____. *Journey to the Center of the City*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.
- Yoder, John Howard. *The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971.
- _____. "A People in the World." In *The Royal Priesthood*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1998.

Websites

- Better Together St. Louis. "About." www.bettertogetherstil.com/about (accessed September 15, 2015).
- Bonhomme Presbyterian Church. "Our Past." www.bonhomme.com/who_we_are/past/index.php (accessed November 11, 2014).
- Bryant, Tim. "Anchors and Transit Spur Growth of St. Louis Corridor." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 26, 2014. http://www.stltoday.com/business/local/anchors-and-transit-spur-growth-of-st-louis-corridor/article_f095688e-11b9-5819-9bc7-14292595c47a.html (accessed May 26, 2014).
- Florida, Richard. "The Search for Affordable Housing is Pushing the Middle Class to the Exurbs." *The Atlantic Cities*. 2014/04/search-affordable-housing-pushing-middle-class-exurbs/8816 (accessed April 23, 2014).
- One Thousand and One New Worshipping Communities. "Assessment." <http://www.one-thousandone.org/#!/assessment/c1w8s> (accessed October 24, 2015).
- Presbyterian Mission Agency. "Ten Year Trends." apps.pcusa.org/tenyeartrends/reports/20230/worship_attendance.jsp?format=bar_graphs (accessed October 15, 2015).
- Rainer, Thom. "Six Ways Millenials Are Shaping the Church." <http://thomrainer.com/2013/12/11/six-ways-millennials-are-shaping-the-church> (accessed November 20, 2014).
- River Front Times. "The Arch Doesn't Honor You, St. Louisan Slackers: Bill McClellan's Nugget of Genius." http://blogs.riverfronttimes.com/dailyrft/2009/07/the_arch_is_not_for_you_st_louisian_slackers.php (accessed November 11, 2014).

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. “Fair Housing Laws and Presidential Executive Orders.” http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/FHLaws (accessed November 11, 2014).